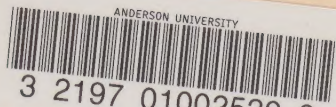




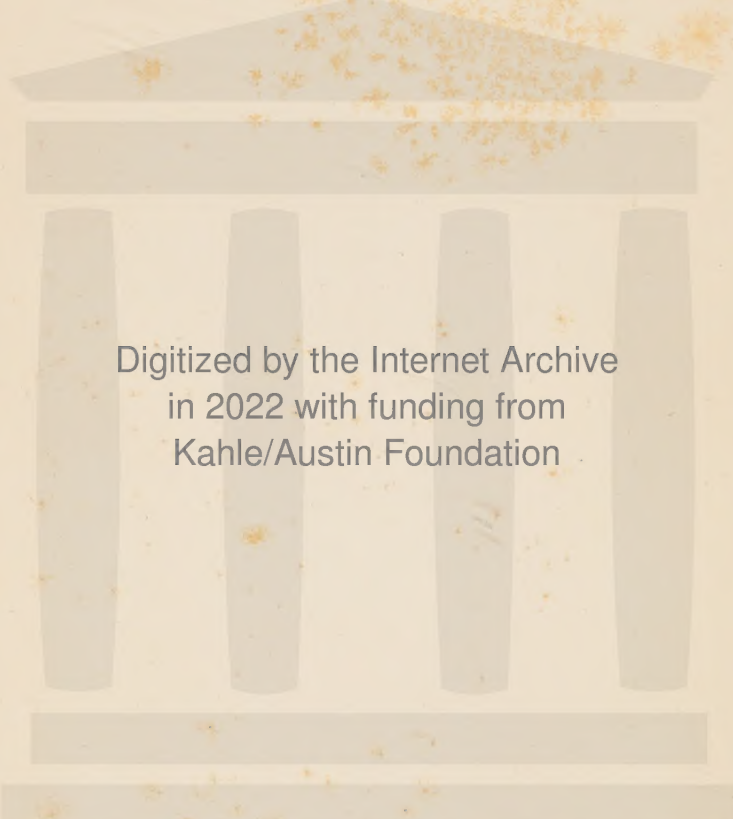
PR 4703 .A2 1902 v.7 9057.
FitzGerald, Edward
Letters & literary remains
of Edward FitzGerald

PR 4703 .A2 1902 v.7 9057.
FitzGerald, Edward
Letters & literary remains
of Edward FitzGerald

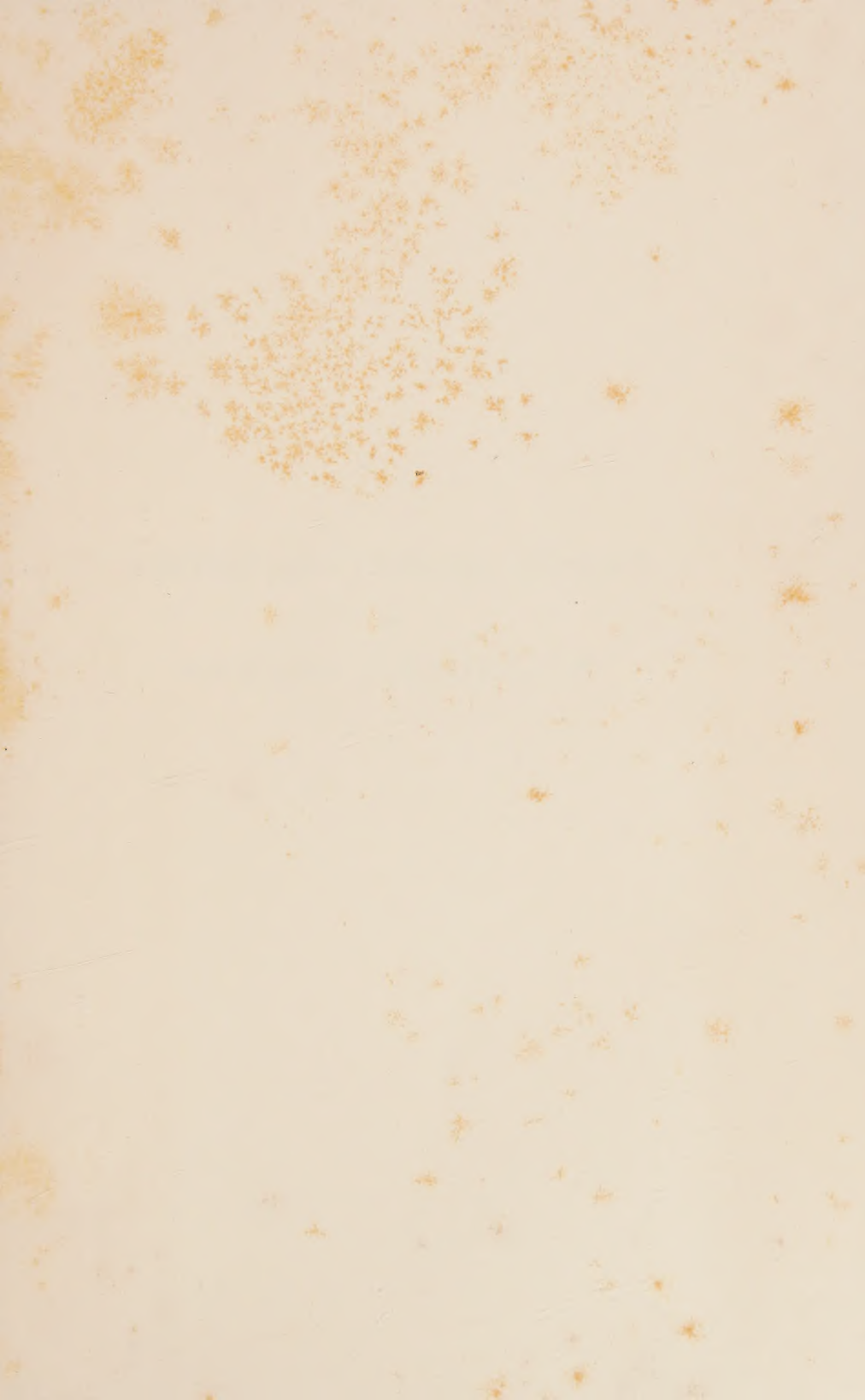
LIBRARY
ANDERSON, INDIANA



3 2197 01002539 9



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2022 with funding from
Kahle/Austin Foundation



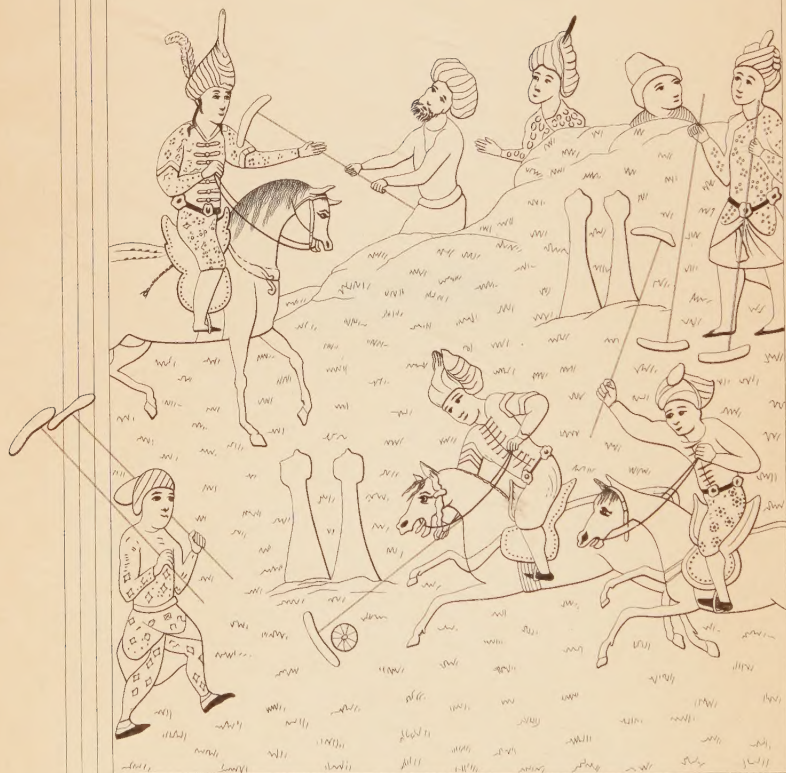
LETTERS AND LITERARY REMAINS

OF

EDWARD FITZGERALD



شهباز خوش بیدان آید گویین



Welcome, Prince of Horsemen, welcome!
Ride a field, and strike the Ball!



Letters & Literary Remains
of
Edward FitzGerald, 1809-1893

IN SEVEN VOLUMES

VOL. VII

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

NEW YORK : THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1903

All rights reserved

This Edition consists of Seven hundred and seventy-five Copies

ANDERSON COLLEGE
LIBRARY
ANDERSON, INDIANA

CONTENTS

RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM—

	PAGE
First Edition, 1859	I
Second Edition, 1868	37
Third Edition, 1872	85
Fourth Edition, 1879	133
SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL	187
BIRD-PARLIAMENT	255
THE TWO GENERALS	313
BREDFIELD HALL	319
CHRONOMOROS	325
VIRGIL'S GARDEN	329
FROM PETRARCH	332
OCCASIONAL VERSES	333
PREFACE TO POLONIUS	337
INTRODUCTION TO READINGS IN CRABBE	353
WRITTEN BY PETRARCH IN HIS VIRGIL	368
MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON	370
DEATH OF BERNARD BARTON	412
FUNERAL OF BERNARD BARTON	419
DEATH OF THE REV. GEORGE CRABBE	421
CHARLES LAMB	426
ON RED BOXES	432

RUBÁIYÁT
OF
OMAR KHAYYÁM

FIRST EDITION

1859

VOL. VII

I

B

OMAR KHAYYÁM

THE

ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

OMAR KHAYYÁM was born at Naishápúr in Khorassán in the latter half of our Eleventh, and died within the First Quarter of our Twelfth, Century. The slender Story of his Life is curiously twined about that of two other very considerable Figures in their Time and Country : one of them, Hasan al Sabbáh, whose very Name has lengthen'd down to us as a terrible Synonym for Murder : and the other (who also tells the Story of all Three) Nizám al Mulk, Vizyr to Alp the Lion and Malik Shah, Son and Grandson of Toghrul Beg the Tartar, who had wrested Persia from the feeble Successor of Mahmúd the Great, and founded that Seljukian Dynasty which finally roused Europe into the Crusades. This Nizám al Mulk, in his *Wasýat*—or *Testament*—which he wrote and left as a Memorial for future Statesmen—relates the

OMAR KHAYYÁM

following, as quoted in the *Calcutta Review*, No. lix., from Mirkhond's *History of the Assassins*.

“One of the greatest of the wise men of Khorassán was the Imám Mowaffak of Naishápúr, a man highly honoured and revered,—may God rejoice his soul; his illustrious years exceeded eighty-five, and it was the universal belief that every boy who read the Koran or studied the traditions in his presence, would assuredly attain to honour and happiness. For this cause did my father send me from Tús to Naishápúr with Abd-u-samad, the doctor of law, that I might employ myself in study and learning under the guidance of that illustrious teacher. Towards me he ever turned an eye of favour and kindness, and as his pupil I felt for him extreme affection and devotion, so that I passed four years in his service. When I first came there, I found two other pupils of mine own age newly arrived, Hakim Omar Khayyám and the ill-fated Ben Sabbáh. Both were endowed with sharpness of wit and the highest natural powers; and we three formed a close friendship together. When the Imám rose from his lectures, they used to join me, and we repeated to each other the lessons we had heard. Now Omar was a native of Naishápúr, while Hasan Ben Sabbáh's father was one Ali, a man of austere life and practice, but heretical in his creed and doctrine. One day Hasan said to me and to Khayyám, ‘It

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

is a universal belief that the pupils of the Imám Mowaffak will attain to fortune. Now, even if we *all* do not attain thereto, without doubt one of us will ; what then shall be our mutual pledge and bond ?' We answered, 'Be it what you please.' 'Well,' he said, 'let us make a vow, that to whomsoever this fortune falls, he shall share it equally with the rest, and reserve no pre-eminence for himself.' 'Be it so,' we both replied, and on these terms we mutually pledged our words. Years rolled on, and I went from Khorassán to Transoxiana, and wandered to Ghazni and Cabul ; and when I returned, I was invested with office, and rose to be administrator of affairs during the Sultanate of Sultan Alp Arslán."

'He goes on to state, that years passed by, and both his old school-friends found him out, and came and claimed a share in his good fortune, according to the school-day vow. The Vizier was generous and kept his word. Hasan demanded a place in the government, which the Sultan granted at the Vizier's request ; but discontented with a gradual rise, he plunged into the maze of intrigue of an oriental court, and, failing in a base attempt to supplant his benefactor, he was disgraced and fell. After many mishaps and wanderings, Hasan became the head of the Persian sect of the *Ismailians*,—a party of fanatics who had long murmured in obscurity, but rose to an evil eminence under the

OMAR KHAYYAM

guidance of his strong and evil will. In A.D. 1090, he seized the castle of Alamút, in the province of Rúdbar, which lies in the mountainous tract south of the Caspian Sea; and it was from this mountain home he obtained that evil celebrity among the Crusaders as the OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS, and spread terror through the Mohammedan world; and it is yet disputed whether the word *Assassin*, which they have left in the language of modern Europe as their dark memorial, is derived from the *hashish*, or opiate of hemp-leaves (the Indian *bhang*), with which they maddened themselves to the sullen pitch of oriental desperation, or from the name of the founder of the dynasty, whom we have seen in his quiet collegiate days at Naishápúr. One of the countless victims of the Assassin's dagger was Nizám-ul-Mulk himself, the old schoolboy friend.

‘Omar Khayyám also came to the Vizier to claim his share; but not to ask for title or office. “The greatest boon you can confer on me,” he said, “is to let me live in a corner under the shadow of your fortune, to spread wide the advantages of Science, and pray for your long life and prosperity.” The Vizier tells us, that, when he found Omar was really sincere in his refusal, he pressed him no further, but granted him a yearly pension of 1200 *mithkáls* of gold, from the treasury of Naishápúr.

‘At Naishápúr thus lived and died Omar

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

Khayyám, “busied,” adds the Vizier, “in winning knowledge of every kind, and especially in Astronomy, wherein he attained to a very high pre-eminence. Under the Sultanate of Malik Shah, he came to Merv, and obtained great praise for his proficiency in science, and the Sultan showered favours upon him.”

‘When Malik Shah determined to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight learned men employed to do it; the result was the *Jaláli* era (so called from *Jalál-ud-din*, one of the king’s names),—“a computation of time,” says Gibbon, “which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style.” He is also the author of some astronomical tables, entitled *Zíji-Malik-sháhi*,’ and the French have lately republished and translated an Arabic Treatise of his on Algebra.

These severer Studies, and his Verses, which, though happily fewer than any Persian Poet’s, and, though perhaps fugitively composed, the Result of no fugitive Emotion or Thought, are probably the Work and Event of his Life, leaving little else to record. Perhaps he liked a little Farming too, so often as he speaks of the ‘Edge of the Tilth’ on which he loved to rest with his Diwán of Verse, his Loaf—and his Wine.

‘His Takhallus or poetical name (Khayyám) signifies a Tent-maker, and he is said to have at one time exercised that trade, perhaps before

OMAR KHAYYÁM

Nizám-ul-Mulk's generosity raised him to independence. Many Persian poets similarly derive their names from their occupations; thus we have Attár, "a druggist," Assar, "an oil presser," etc. (Though all these, like our Smiths, Archers, Millers, Fletchers, etc., may simply retain the Surname of an hereditary calling.) "Omar himself alludes to his name in the following whimsical lines :—

“Khayyám, who stitched the tents of science,
Has fallen in grief's furnace and been suddenly burned ;
The shears of Fate have cut the tent ropes of his life,
And the broker of Hope has sold him for nothing !”

‘We have only one more anecdote to give of his Life, and that relates to the close; related in the anonymous preface which is sometimes prefixed to his poems; it has been printed in the Persian in the appendix to Hyde's *Veterum Persarum Religio*, p. 499; and D'Herbelot alludes to it in his *Bibliothèque*, under *Khiam* :¹—

“It is written in the chronicles of the ancients that this King of the Wise, Omar Khayyám, died at Naishápúr in the year of the Hegira, 517 (A.D. 1123); in science he was un-

¹ Though *he* attributes the story to a Khiam, ‘Philosophe Musulman qui a vécu en Odeur de Sainteté dans la Fin du premier et le Commencement du second Siècle,’ no part of which, except the ‘Philosophe,’ can apply to *our* Khayyám, who, however, may claim the Story as *his*, on the Score of Rubáiyát 77 and 78 of the present Version. The Rashness of the Words, according to D'Herbelot, consisted in being so opposed to those in the Korán : ‘No man knows where he shall die.’

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

rivalled,—the very paragon of his age. Khwájah Nizámi of Samarcand, who was one of his pupils, relates the following story : ‘ I often used to hold conversations with my teacher, Omar Khayyám, in a garden ; and one day he said to me, ‘ my tomb shall be in a spot, where the north wind may scatter roses over it.’ I wondered at the words he spake, but I knew that his were no idle words. Years after, when I chanced to revisit Naishápúr, I went to his final resting place, and lo ! it was just outside a garden, and trees laden with fruit stretched their boughs over the garden wall, and dropped their flowers upon his tomb, so as the stone was hidden under them.’ ”

Thus far—without fear of Trespass—from the *Calcutta Review*.

Though the Sultan ‘ shower’d Favours upon him,’ Omar’s Epicurean Audacity of Thought and Speech caused him to be regarded askance in his own Time and Country. He is said to have been especially hated and dreaded by the Súfis, whose Practice he ridiculed, and whose Faith amounts to little more than his own when stript of the Mysticism and formal Compliment to Islamism which Omar would not hide under. Their Poets, including Háfiz, who are (with the exception of Firdúsi) the most considerable in Persia, borrowed largely, indeed, of Omar’s material, but turning it to a mystical Use more convenient to Themselves and the People they address’d ; a People quite as quick of Doubt as of

OMAR KHAYYÁM

Belief ; quite as keen of the Bodily Senses as of the Intellectual ; and delighting in a cloudy Element compounded of all, in which they could float luxuriously between Heaven and Earth, and this World and the Next, on the wings of a poetical expression, that could be recited indifferently whether at the Mosque or the Tavern. Omar was too honest of Heart as well as of Head for this. Having failed (however mistakenly) of finding any Providence but Destiny, and any World but This, he set about making the most of it ; preferring rather to soothe the Soul through the Senses into Acquiescence with Things as they were, than to perplex it with vain mortifications after what they *might be*. It has been seen that his Worldly Desires, however, were not exorbitant ; and he very likely takes a humorous pleasure in exaggerating them above that Intellect in whose exercise he must have found great pleasure, though not in a Theological direction. However this may be, his Worldly Pleasures are what they profess to be without any Pretence at divine Allegory : his Wine is the veritable Juice of the Grape : his Tavern, where it was to be had : his Sáki, the Flesh and Blood that poured it out for him : all which, and where the Roses were in Bloom, was all he profess'd to want of this World or to expect of Paradise.

The Mathematic Faculty, too, which regulated his Fancy, and condensed his Verse to a Quality

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

and Quantity unknown in Persian, perhaps in Oriental, Poetry, help'd by its very virtue perhaps to render him less popular with his countrymen. If the Greeks were Children in Gossip, what does Persian Literature imply but a *Second Childishness* of Garrulity? And certainly if no *ungeometric* Greek was to enter Plato's School of Philosophy, no so unchastised a Persian should enter on the Race of Persian Verse, with its 'fatal Facility' of running on long after Thought is winded! But Omar was not only the single Mathematician of his Country's Poets; he was also of that older Time and stouter Temper, before the native Soul of Persia was quite broke by a foreign Creed as well as foreign Conquest. Like his great Predecessor Firdúsi, who was as little of a *Mystic*; who scorned to use even a *Word* of the very language in which the New Faith came clothed; and who was suspected, not of Omar's Irreligion indeed, but of secretly clinging to the ancient Fire-Religion of Zerdusht, of which so many of the Kings he sang were Worshippers.

For whatever Reason, however, Omar, as before said, has never been popular in his own Country, and therefore has been but charily transmitted abroad. The MSS. of his Poems, mutilated beyond the average Casualties of Oriental Transcription, are so rare in the East as scarce to have reacht Westward at all, in spite of all that Arms and Science have brought us. There is none at the India House, none at the

OMAR KHAYYAM

Bibliothèque Impériale of Paris. We know but of one in England; No. 140 of the Ouseley MSS. at the Bodleian, written at Shiraz, A.D. 1460. This contains but 158 Rubáiyát. One in the Asiatic Society's Library of Calcutta (of which we have a Copy) contains (and yet incomplete) 516, though swelled to that by all kinds of Repetition and Corruption. So Von Hammer speaks of *his* Copy as containing about 200, while Dr. Sprenger catalogues the Lucknow MS. at double that Number. The Scribes, too, of the Oxford and Calcutta MSS. seem to do their Work under a sort of Protest; each beginning with a Tetrastich (whether genuine or not) taken out of its alphabetical order; the Oxford with one of Apology; the Calcutta with one of Execration too stupid for Omar's, even had Omar been stupid enough to execrate himself.¹

The Reviewer, who translates the foregoing Particulars of Omar's Life, and some of his Verse into Prose, concludes by comparing him with Lucretius, both in natural Temper and Genius, and as acted upon by the Circumstances in which he lived. Both indeed men of subtle Intellect and high Imagination, instructed in Learning beyond their day, and of Hearts

¹ 'Since this Paper was written' (adds the Reviewer in a note) 'we have met with a Copy of a very rare Edition, printed at Calcutta in 1836. This contains 438 Tetrastichs, with an Appendix containing 54 others not found in some MSS.'

THE ASTRONOMER POET OF PERSIA

passionate for Truth and Justice ; who justly revolted from their Country's false Religion, and false, or foolish, Devotion to it ; but who yet fell short of replacing what they subverted by any such better *Hope* as others, upon whom no better *Faith* had dawned, had yet made a Law to themselves. Lucretius, indeed, with such material as Epicurus furnished, consoled himself with the construction of a Machine that needed no Constructor, and acting by a Law that implied no Lawgiver ; and so composing himself into a Stoical rather than Epicurean severity of Attitude, sat down to contemplate the mechanical Drama of the Universe of which he was part Actor ; himself and all about him (as in his own sublime Description of the Roman Theatre), coloured with the lurid reflex of the Curtain that was suspended between them and the outer Sun. Omar, more desperate, or more careless, of any such laborious System as resulted in nothing more than hopeless Necessity, flung his own Genius and Learning with a bitter jest into the general Ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal ; and, yielding his Senses to the actual Rose and Vine, only *diverted* his thoughts by balancing ideal possibilities of Fate, Freewill, Existence and Annihilation ; with an oscillation that so generally inclined to the negative and lower side, as to make such Stanzas as the following exceptions to his general Philosophy—

OMAR KHAYYÁM

Oh, if my Soul can fling his Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
Is't not a Shame, is't not a Shame for Him
So long in this Clay Suburb to abide !

Or is *that* but a Tent, where rests anon
A Sultán to his Kingdom passing on,
And which the swarthy Chamberlain shall strike
Then when the Sultán rises to be gone ?

With regard to the present Translation. The original Rubáiyát (as, missing an Arabic Guttural, these *Tetrastichs* are more musically called), are independent Stanzas, consisting each of four Lines of equal, though varied, Prosody, sometimes *all* rhyming, but oftener (as here attempted) the third line suspending the Cadence by which the last atones with the former Two. Something as in the Greek Alcaic, where the third line seems to lift and suspend the Wave that falls over in the last. As usual with such kind of Oriental Verse, the Rubáiyát follow one another according to Alphabetic Rhyme—a strange Farrago of Grave and Gay. Those here selected are strung into something of an Eclogue, with perhaps a less than equal proportion of the ‘Drink and make-merry,’ which (genuine or not) recurs over-frequently in the Original. For Lucretian as Omar’s Genius might be, he cross’d that darker Mood with much of Olivier de Basselin Humour. Any way, the Result is sad enough : saddest perhaps when most ostentatiously merry : any way, fitter to move Sorrow

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

than Anger toward the old Tentmaker, who, after vainly endeavouring to unshackle his Steps from Destiny, and to catch some authentic Glimpse of To-MORROW, fell back upon To-DAY (which has out-lastcd so many To-morrows !) as the only Ground he got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his Feet.

RUBÁIYÁT

OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR

I.

AWAKE ! for Morning in the Bowl of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight :
And Lo ! the Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultán's Turret in a Noose of Light.

II.

Dreaming when Dawn's Left Hand was in the
Sky
I heard a Voice within the Tavern cry,
'Awake, my Little ones, and fill the Cup
Before Life's Liquor in its Cup be dry.'

III.

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted—'Open then the Door !
You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more.'

VOL. VII

17

c

RUBAIYÁT OF

IV.

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the
Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

V.

Irám indeed is gone with all its Rose,
And Jamshýd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one
knows ;
But still the Vine her ancient Ruby yields,
And still a Garden by the Water blows.

VI.

And David's Lips are lockt ; but in divine
High piping Pehleví, with 'Wine ! Wine !
Wine !
Red Wine !'—the Nightingale cries to the
Rose
That yellow Cheek of her's to'incarnadine.

VII.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
The Winter Garment of Repentance fling :
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly—and Lo ! the Bird is on the Wing.

OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHAPÚR

VIII.

And look—a thousand Blossoms with the Day
Woke—and a thousand scatter'd into Clay :

And this first Summer Month that brings the
Rose
Shall take Jamshýd and Kaikobád away.

IX.

But come with old Khayyám, and leave the Lot
Of Kaikobád and Kaikhosrú forgot :

Let Rustum lay about him as he will,
Or Hátim Tai cry Supper—heed them not.

X.

With me along some Strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,

Where name of Slave and Sultán scarce is
known,
And pity Sultán Máhmúd on his Throne.

XI.

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou

Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

XII.

‘How sweet is mortal Sovranty!’—think some :
Others—‘How blest the Paradise to come!’

Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest ;
Oh, the brave Music of a *distant* Drum !

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XIII.

Look to the Rose that blows about us—‘Lo,
Laughing,’ she says, ‘into the World I blow :
At once the silken Tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.’

XIV.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers ; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert’s dusty Face
Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone.

XV.

And those who husbanded the Golden Grain,
And those who flung it to the Winds like Rain,
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn’d
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

XVI.

Think, in this batter’d Caravanseraï
Whose Doorways are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his Hour or two, and went his way.

XVII.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshýd gloried and drank
deep ;
And Bahrám, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o’er his Head, and he lies fast asleep.

OMAR KHAYYAM OF NAISHAPÚR

XVIII.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled ;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in its Lap from some once lovely Head.

XIX.

And this delightful Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly ! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen !

XX.

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears
To-day of past Regrets and future Fears—
To-morrow ?—Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years.

XXI.

Lo ! some we loved, the loveliest and best
That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to Rest.

XXII.

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new Bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend, ourselves to make a Couch—for whom ?

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XXIII.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend ;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans
End !

XXIV.

Alike for those who for TO-DAY prepare,
And those that after a TO-MORROW stare,
A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries
‘ Fools ! your Reward is neither Here nor There ! ’

XXV.

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss’d
Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth ; their Words to
Scorn
Are scatter’d, and their Mouths are stopt with
Dust.

XXVI.

Oh, come with old Khayyám, and leave the Wise
To talk ; one thing is certain, that Life flies ;
One thing is certain, and the Rest is Lies ;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

XXVII.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument
About it and about : but evermore
Came out by the same Door as in I went.

OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR

XXVIII.

With them the Seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with my own hand labour'd it to grow :
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—
'I came like Water, and like Wind I go.'

XXIX.

Into this Universe, and *why* not knowing,
Nor *whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing :
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

XXX.

What, without asking, hither hurried *whence* ?
And, without asking, *whither* hurried hence !
Another and another Cup to drown
The Memory of this Impertinence !

XXXI.

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many Knots unravel'd by the Road ;
But not the Knot of Human Death and Fate.

XXXII.

There was a Door to which I found no Key :
There was a Veil past which I could not see :
Some little Talk awhile of ME and THEE
There seem'd—and then no more of THEE and ME.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XXXIII.

Then to the rolling Heav'n itself I cried,
Asking, 'What Lamp had Destiny to guide
Her little Children stumbling in the Dark ?'
And—'A blind Understanding !' Heav'n replied.

XXXIV.

Then to this earthen Bowl did I adjourn
My Lip the secret Well of Life to learn :
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—'While you live
Drink !—for once dead you never shall return.'

XXXV.

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answer'd, once did live,
And merry-make ; and the cold Lip I kiss'd
How many Kisses might it take—and give !

XXXVI.

For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,
I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet Clay :
And with its all obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd—'Gently, Brother, gently, pray !'

XXXVII.

Ah, fill the Cup :—what boots it to repeat
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet :
Unborn TO-MORROW, and dead YESTERDAY,
Why fret about them if TO-DAY be sweet !

OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHAPÚR

XXXVIII.

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
The Stars are setting and the Caravan
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing—Oh, make haste !

XXXIX.

How long, how long, in infinite Pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute ?
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

XL.

You know, my Friends, how long since in my
House
For a new Marriage I did make Carouse :
Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

XLI.

For 'Is' and 'Is-NOT' though *with* Rule and Line,
And 'UP-AND-DOWN' *without*, I could define,
I yet in all I only cared to know,
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

XLII.

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came stealing through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder ; and
He bid me taste of it ; and 'twas—the Grape !

RUBÚIYAT OF

XLIII.

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute :
The subtle Alchemist that in a Trice
Life's leaden Metal into Gold transmute.

XLIV.

The mighty Mahmúd, the victorious Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters and slays with his enchanted Sword.

XLV.

But leave the Wise to wrangle, and with me
The Quarrel of the Universe let be :
And, in some corner of the Hubbub coucht,
Make Game of that which makes as much of Thee.

XLVI.

For in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a Magic Shadow-show,
Play'd in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go.

XLVII.

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in the Nothing all Things end in—Yes—
Then fancy while Thou art, Thou art but what
Thou shalt be—Nothing—Thou shalt not be less.

OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHAPÚR

XLVIII.

While the Rose blows along the River Brink,
With old Khayyám the Ruby Vintage drink :
And when the Angel with his darker Draught
Draws up to Thee—take that, and do not shrink.

XLIX.

'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays :
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

L.

The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes ;
And He that toss'd Thee down into the Field,
He knows about it all—*HE* knows—*HE* knows !

LI.

The Moving Finger writes ; and, having writ,
Moves on : nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

LII.

And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,
Whereunder crawling coopt we live and die,
Lift not thy hands to *It* for help—for *It*
Rolls impotently on as Thou or I.

RUBÁIYAT OF

LIII.

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man's
knead,
And then of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed :
Yea, the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

LIV.

I tell Thee this—When, starting from the Goal,
Over the shoulders of the flaming Foal
Of Heav'n Parwín and Mushtara they flung,
In my predestin'd Plot of Dust and Soul

LV.

The Vine had struck a Fibre ; which about
If clings my Being—let the Súfi flout ;
Of my Base Metal may be filed a Key,
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

LVI.

And this I know : whether the one True Light,
Kindle to Love, or Wrath consume me quite,
One glimpse of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

LVII.

Oh Thou, who didst with Pitfall and with Gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestination round
Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin !

OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR

LVIII.

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And who with Eden didst devise the Snake ;
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd, Man's Forgiveness give—and take !

KÚZA-NÁMA.

LIX.

Listen again. One evening at the Close
Of Ramazán, ere the better Moon arose,
In that old Potter's Shop I stood alone
With the clay Population round in Rows.

LX.

And, strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot
Some could articulate, while others not :
And suddenly one more impatient cried—
' Who *is* the Potter, pray, and who the Pot ? '

LXI.

Then said another—' Surely not in vain
My Substance from the common Earth was ta'en,
That He who subtly wrought me into Shape
Should stamp me back to common Earth again.'

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LXII.

Another said—‘ Why, ne’er a peevish Boy,
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in
Joy ;
Shall He that *made* the Vessel in pure Love
And Fancy, in an after Rage destroy ! ’

LXIII.

None answer’d this ; but after Silence spake
A Vessel of a more ungainly Make :
‘ They sneer at me for leaning all awry ;
What ! did the Hand then of the Potter shake ? ’

LXIV.

Said one—‘ Folks of a surly Tapster tell,
And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell ;
They talk of some strict Testing of us—Pish !
He’s a Good Fellow, and ’twill all be well.’

LXV.

Then said another with a long-drawn Sigh,
‘ My Clay with long oblivion is gone dry :
But, fill me with the old familiar Juice,
Methinks I might recover by-and-bye ! ’

LXVI.

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,
One spied the little Crescent all were seeking :
And then they jogg’d each other, ‘ Brother !
Brother !
Hark to the Porter’s Shoulder-knot a-creaking ! ’

OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR

LXVII.

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash my Body whence the Life has died,
And in a Windingsheet of Vine-leaf wrapt,
So bury me by some sweet Garden-side.

LXVIII.

That ev'n my buried Ashes such a Snare
Of Perfume shall fling up into the Air,
As not a True Believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

LXIX.

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my Credit in Men's Eye much wrong :
Have drown'd my Honour in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

LXX.

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore—but was I sober when I swore ?
And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-
hand
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

LXXI.

And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel,
And robb'd me of my Robe of Honour—well,
I often wonder what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the Goods they sell.

RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

LXXII.

Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose !
That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should
close !

The Nightingale that in the Branches sang,
Ah, whence, and whither flown again, who knows !

LXXIII.

Ah Love ! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire !

LXXIV.

Ah, Moon of my Delight who know'st no wane,
The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again :
How oft hereafter rising shall she look
Through this same Garden after me—in vain !

LXXV.

And when Thyself with shining Foot shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in thy joyous Errand reach the Spot
Where I made one—turn down an empty Glass !

TAMÁM SHUD

NOTES

(Stanza 1.) Flinging a Stone into the Cup was the Signal for 'To Horse!' in the Desert.

(11.) The '*False Dawn*;' *Subhi Kházib*, a transient Light on the Horizon about an hour before the *Subhi sâdhik*, or True Dawn; a well-known Phenomenon in the East. The Persians call the Morning Gray, or Dusk, '*Wolf-and-Sheep-While*.' 'Almost at odds with, which is which.'

(14.) New Year. Beginning with the Vernal Equinox, it must be remembered; and (howsoever the old Solar Year is practically superseded by the clumsy *Lunar* Year that dates from the Moham-medan Hijra) still commemorated by a Festival that is said to have been appointed by the very Jamshyd whom Omar so often talks of, and whose yearly Calendar he helped to rectify.

'The sudden approach and rapid advance of the Spring' (says a late Traveller in Persia) 'are very striking. Before the Snow is well off the Ground, the Trees burst into Blossom, and the Flowers start from the Soil. At *Now Rooz* (their New Year's Day) the Snow was lying in patches on the Hills and in the shaded Vallies, while the Fruit-trees in the Garden were budding beautifully, and green Plants and Flowers springing upon the Plains on every side—

'And on old Hyem's Chin and icy Crown
An odorous Chaplet of sweet Summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set——'

Among the Plants newly appear'd I recognized some old Acquaintances I had not seen for many a Year: among these, two varieties of the Thistle; a coarse species of the Daisy, like the Horse-gowan; red and white Clover; the Dock; the blue Corn-flower; and that vulgar Herb the Dandelion rearing its yellow crest on the Banks of the Watercourses.' The Nightingale was not yet heard, for the Rose was not yet blown; but an almost identical Blackbird and

NOTES

Woodpecker helped to make up something of a North-country Spring.

(iv.) Exodus iv. 6 ; where Moses draws forth his Hand—not, according to the Persians, '*leprous as Snow*,'—but *white* as our May-Blossom in Spring perhaps ! According to them also the Healing Power of Jesus resided in his Breath.

(v.) Irám, planted by King Schedad, and now sunk somewhere in the Sands of Arabia. Jamshyd's Seven-ring'd Cup was typical of the Seven Heavens, 7 Planets, 7 Seas, etc. and was a *Divining Cup*.

(vi.) *Péhlevi*, the old Heroic *Sanskrit* of Persia. Háfiz also speaks of the Nightingale's *Péhlevi*, which did not change with the People's.

(vi.) I am not sure if this refers to the Red Rose looking sickly, or the Yellow Rose that ought to be Red ; Red, White, and Yellow Roses all common in Persia.

(ix.) Rustum, the 'Hercules' of Persia, whose exploits are among the most celebrated in the Shah-náma. Hátim Tai, a well-known Type of Oriental Generosity.

(xii.) A Drum—beaten outside a Palace.

(xiii.) That is, the Rose's Golden Centre.

(xvii.) Persepolis : call'd also *Takht'i Jamshyd*—THE THRONE OF JAMSHYD, '*King-Splendid*,' of the mythical *Peeshdúddian* Dynasty, and supposed (with Shah-náma Authority) to have been founded and built by him, though others refer it to the Work of the Genie King, Ján Ibn Jann, who also built the Pyramids before the time of Adam. It is also called *Chehl-minar*—*Forty-column* ; which is Persian, probably, for *Column-countless* ; the Hall they adorned or supported with their Lotus Base and taurine Capital indicating double that Number, though now counted down to less than half by Earthquake and other Inroad. By whomsoever built, unquestionably the Monument of a long-extinguished Dynasty and Mythology ; its Halls, Chambers and Galleries, inscribed with Arrow-head Characters, and sculptured with colossal, wing'd, half-human Figures like those of Nimroud ; Processions of Priests and Warriors—(doubtful if any where a Woman)—and Kings sitting on Thrones or in Chariots, Staff or Lotus-flower in hand, and the *Ferooher*—Symbol of Existence—with his wing'd Globe, common also to Assyria and Ægypt—over their heads. All this, together with Aqueduct and Cistern, and other Appurtenance of a Royal Palace, upon a Terrace-platform, ascended by a double Flight of Stairs that may be gallop'd up, and cut out of and into the Rock-side of the *Koh'i Ráhmet*, *Mountain of Mercy*, where the old Fire-worshipping Sovereigns are buried, and overlooking the Plain of Merdasht.

NOTES

Persians, like some other People, it seems, love to write their own Names, with sometimes a Verse or two, on their Country's Monuments. Mr. Binning (from whose sensible Travels the foregoing Account is mainly condens't) found several such in Persepolis; in one Place a fine Line of Háfiz: in another 'an original, no doubt,' he says, 'by no great Poet,' however 'right in his Sentiment.' The Words somehow looked to us, and the 'halting metre' sounded, familiar; and on looking back at last among the 500 Rubáyíát of the Calcutta Omar MS.—*there* it is: old Omar quoted by *one* of his Countrymen, and here turned into hasty Rhyme, at any rate—

'This Palace that its Top to Heaven threw,
And Kings their Forehead on its Threshold drew—
I saw a Ring-dove sitting there alone,
And "Coo, Coo, Coo," she cried, and "Coo, Coo, Coo."'

So as it seems the Persian speaks the English Ring-dove's *Péhlevi*, which is also articulate Persian for 'Where?'

BAHRÁM GÚR—*Bahrám of the Wild Ass*, from his Fame in hunting it—a Sassanian Sovereign, had also his Seven Castles (like the King of Bohemia!) each of a different Colour; each with a Royal Mistress within side; each of whom recounts to Bahrám a Romance, according to one of the most famous Poems of Persia, written by Amír Khusraw: these Sevens also figuring (according to Eastern Mysticism) the Seven Heavens, and perhaps the Book itself that Eighth, into which the mystical Seven transcend, and within which they revolve. The Ruins of Three of these Towers are yet shown by the Peasantry; as also the Swamp in which Bahrám sunk, like the Master of Ravenswood, while pursuing his *Gúr*.

(xx.) A Thousand Years to each Planet.

(xxxI.) Saturn, Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

(xli.) A Laugh at his Mathematics perhaps.

(xxxII.) ME AND THEE; that is, some Dividual Existence or Personality apart from the Whole.

(xxxVIII.) The Caravan travelling by Night (after their New Year's Day of the Vernal Equinox) by command of Mohammed, I believe.

(xliii.) The 72 Sects into which Islamism so soon split.

(xliV.) This alludes to Mahmúd's Conquest of India and its swarthy Idolaters.

(xliV.) *Fanúsi khiyál*, a Magic-lantern still used in India; the cylindrical Interior being painted with various Figures, and so lightly poised and ventilated as to revolve round the Candle lighted within.

NOTES

(L.) A very mysterious Line in the original ;

U dánad u dánad u dánad u——

breaking off something like our Wood-pigeon's Note, which she is said to take up just where she left off.

(LIV.) Parwín and Mushtara—The Pleiads and Jupiter.

(LXVI.) At the Close of the Fasting Month, Ramazán (which makes the Musulman unhealthy and unamiable), the first Glimpse of the New Moon (who rules their Division of the Year) is looked for with the utmost Anxiety, and hailed with all Acclamation. Then it is that the Porter's Knot may be heard toward the *Cellar*, perhaps. Old Omar has elsewhere a pretty Quatrain about this same Moon—

‘Be of Good Cheer—the sullen Month will die,
And a young Moon requite us by and bye :
Look how the Old one meagre, bent, and wan
With Age and Fast, is fainting from the Sky !’

RUBAIYÁT
OF
OMAR KHAYYÁM
SECOND EDITION
1868

OMAR KHAYYÁM

THE

ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

OMAR KHAYYÁM was born at Naishápúr in Khorassán in the latter half of our Eleventh, and died within the First Quarter of our Twelfth, Century. The slender Story of his Life is curiously twined about that of two other very considerable Figures in their Time and Country : one of whom tells the Story of all Three. This was Nizám ul Mulk, Vizyr to Alp Arslan the Son, and Malik Shah the Grandson, of Toghrul Beg the Tartar, who had wrested Persia from the feeble successor of Mahmúd the Great, and founded that Seljukian Dynasty which finally roused Europe into the Crusades. This Nizám ul Mulk, in his *Wasiyat*—or *Testament*—which he wrote and left as a Memorial for future Statesmen—relates the following, as quoted in the *Calcutta Review*, No. lix., from Mirkhond's *History of the Assassins*.

“One of the greatest of the wise men of

OMAR KHAYYÁM

Khorassán was the Imám Mowaffak of Naishápúr, a man highly honoured and revered,—may God rejoice his soul; his illustrious years exceeded eighty-five, and it was the universal belief that every boy who read the Koran or studied the traditions in his presence, would assuredly attain to honour and happiness. For this cause did my father send me from Tús to Naishápúr with Abd-us-samad, the doctor of law, that I might employ myself in study and learning under the guidance of that illustrious teacher. Towards me he ever turned an eye of favour and kindness, and as his pupil I felt for him extreme affection and devotion, so that I passed four years in his service. When I first came there, I found two other pupils of mine own age newly arrived, Hakim Omar Khayyám, and the ill-fated Ben Sabbáh. Both were endowed with sharpness of wit and the highest natural powers; and we three formed a close friendship together. When the Imám rose from his lectures, they used to join me, and we repeated to each other the lessons we had heard. Now Omar was a native of Naishápúr, while Hasan Ben Sabbáh's father was one Ali, a man of austere life and practice, but heretical in his creed and doctrine. One day Hasan said to me and to Khayyám, 'It is a universal belief that the pupils of the Imám Mowaffak will attain to fortune. Now, even if we *all* do not attain thereto, without doubt one of us will; what

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

then shall be our mutual pledge and bond ?' We answered, 'Be it what you please.' 'Well,' he said, 'let us make a vow, that to whomsoever this fortune falls, he shall share it equally with the rest, and reserve no pre-eminence for himself.' 'Be it so,' we both replied, and on those terms we mutually pledged our words. Years rolled on, and I went from Khorassán to Transoxiana, and wandered to Ghazni and Cabul ; and when I returned, I was invested with office, and rose to be administrator of affairs during the Sultanate of Sultan Alp Arslán."

'He goes on to state, that years passed by, and both his old school-friends found him out, and came and claimed a share in his good fortune, according to the school-day vow. The Vizier was generous and kept his word. Hasan demanded a place in the government, which the Sultan granted at the Vizier's request ; but discontented with a gradual rise, he plunged into the maze of intrigue of an oriental court, and, failing in a base attempt to supplant his benefactor, he was disgraced and fell. After many mishaps and wanderings, Hasan became the head of the Persian sect of the *Ismailians*,—a party of fanatics who had long murmured in obscurity, but rose to an evil eminence under the guidance of his strong and evil will. In A.D. 1090, he seized the castle of Alamút, in the province of Rúdbar, which lies in the mountainous tract, south of the Caspian Sea ;

OMAR KHAYYÁM

and it was from this mountain home he obtained that evil celebrity among the crusaders as the OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS, and spread terror through the Mohammedan world ; and it is yet disputed whether the word *Assassin*, which they have left in the language of modern Europe as their dark memorial, is derived from the *hashish*, or opiate of hemp-leaves (the Indian *bhang*), with which they maddened themselves to the sullen pitch of oriental desperation, or from the name of the founder of the dynasty, whom we have seen in his quiet collegiate days, at Naishápúr. One of the countless victims of the Assassin's dagger was Nizám ul Mulk himself, the old school-boy friend.¹

‘Omar Khayyám also came to the Vizier to claim the share ; but not to ask for title or office. “The greatest boon you can confer on me,” he said, “is to let me live in a corner under the shadow of your fortune, to spread wide the advantages of Science, and pray for your long life and prosperity.” The Vizier tells us, that, when he found Omar was really sincere in his refusal, he pressed him no further, but granted him a yearly pension of 1200 *mithkáls* of gold, from the treasury of Naishápúr.

¹ Some of Omar's Rubáiyát warn us of the danger of Greatness, the instability of Fortune, and while advocating Charity to all Men, recommending us to be too intimate with none. Attár makes Nizám ul Mulk use the very words of his friend Omar [Rub. xxxi.], ‘When Nizám ul Mulk was in the Agony (of Death) he said, “Oh God ! I am passing away in the hand of the Wind.”’

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

‘At Naishápúr thus lived and died Omar Khayyám, “busied,” adds the Vizier, “in winning knowledge of every kind, and especially in Astronomy, wherein he attained to a very high pre-eminence. Under the Sultanate of Malik Shah, he came to Merv, and obtained great praise for his proficiency in science, and the Sultan showered favours upon him.”

‘When Malik Shah determined to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight learned men employed to do it; the result was the *Jaláli* era (so called from *Jalál-ud-din*, one of the king’s names),—“a computation of time,” says Gibbon, “which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style.” He is also the author of some astronomical tables, entitled *Ziji-Maliksháhí*,’ and the French have lately republished and translated an Arabic Treatise of his on Algebra.

‘His Takhallus or poetical name (Khayyám) signifies a Tent-maker, and he is said to have at one time exercised that trade, perhaps before Nizám ul Mulk’s generosity raised him to independence. Many Persian poets similarly derive their names from their occupations; thus we have Attár, “a druggist,” Assár, “an oil presser,” etc.¹ Omar himself alludes to his name in the following whimsical lines :—

¹ Though all these, like our Smiths, Archers, Millers, Fletchers, etc., may simply retain the Surname of an hereditary calling.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

“Khayyám, who stitched the tents of science,
Has fallen in grief's furnace and been suddenly burned ;
The shears of Fate have cut the tent ropes of his life,
And the broker of Hope has sold him for nothing !”

‘We have only one more anecdote to give of his Life, and that relates to the close ; it is told in the anonymous preface which is sometimes prefixed to his poems ; it has been printed in the Persian in the appendix to Hyde's *Veterum Persarum Religio*, p. 499 ; and D'Herbelot alludes to it in his *Bibliothèque*, under *Khiam* :¹—

“It is written in the chronicles of the ancients that this King of the Wise, Omar Khayyám, died at Naishápúr in the year of the Hegira, 517 (A.D. 1123) ; in science he was unrivalled,—the very paragon of his age. Khwájah Nizámi of Samarcand, who was one of his pupils, relates the following story : ‘I often used to hold conversations with my teacher, Omar Khayyám, in a garden ; and one day he said to me, “My tomb shall be in a spot, where the north wind may scatter roses over it.” I wondered at the words he spake, but I knew that his were no idle words.’²

¹ ‘Philosophe Musulman qui a vécu en Odeur de Sainteté dans la Fin du premier et le Commencement du second Siècle,’ no part of which, except the ‘Philosophe,’ can apply to *our* Khayyám.

² The Rashness of the Words, according to D'Herbelot, consisted in being so opposed to those in the Korán : ‘No Man knows where he shall die.’—This Story of Omar recalls a very different one so naturally—and, when one remembers how wide of his humble mark the noble sailor aimed—so pathetically told by Captain Cook—not by Doctor Hawkesworth—in his Second Voyage. When leaving

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

Years after, when I chanced to revisit Naishápúr, I went to his final resting-place, and lo ! it was just outside a garden, and trees laden with fruit stretched their boughs over the garden wall, and dropped their flowers upon his tomb, so as the stone was hidden under them.' ”

Thus far—without fear of Trespass—from the *Calcutta Review*. The writer of it, on reading in India this story of Omar's Grave, was reminded, he says, of Cicero's Account of finding Archimedes' Tomb at Syracuse, buried in grass and weeds. I think Thorwaldsen desired to have roses grow over him ; a wish religiously fulfilled for him to the present day, I believe. However, to return to Omar.

Though the Sultan 'shower'd Favours upon him,' Omar's Epicurean Audacity of Thought and Speech caused him to be regarded askance in his own Time and Country. He is said to have been especially hated and dreaded by the Súfis, whose Practice he ridiculed, and whose Faith amounts to little more than his own when stript of the Mysticism and formal recognition

Ulietea, 'Oreo's last request was for me to return. When he saw he could not obtain that promise, he asked the name of my *Marai*—Burying-place. As strange a question as this was, I hesitated not a moment to tell him "Stepney," the parish in which I live when in London. I was made to repeat it several times over till they could pronounce it ; and then "Stepney Marai no Tootee" was echoed through a hundred mouths at once. I afterwards found the same question had been put to Mr. Forster by a man on shore ; but he gave a different, and indeed more proper answer, by saying, "No man who used the sea could say where he should be buried."'

OMAR KHAYYÁM

of Islamism under which Omar would not hide. Their Poets, including Háfiz, who are (with the exception of Firdausi) the most considerable in Persia, borrowed largely, indeed, of Omar's material, but turning it to a mystical Use more convenient to Themselves and the People they addressed ; a People quite as quick of Doubt as of Belief ; as keen of Bodily Sense as of Intellectual ; and delighting in a cloudy compound of both, in which they could float luxuriously between Heaven and Earth, and this World and the Next, on the wings of a poetical expression, that might serve indifferently for either. Omar was too honest of Heart as well as of Head for this. Having failed (however mistakenly) of finding any Providence but Destiny, and any World but This, he set about making the most of it ; preferring rather to soothe the Soul through the Senses into Acquiescence with Things as he saw them, than to perplex it with vain disquietude after what they *might be*. It has been seen, however, that his Worldly Ambition was not exorbitant ; and he very likely takes a humorous or perverse pleasure in exalting the gratification of Sense above that of the Intellect, in which he must have taken great delight, although it failed to answer the Questions in which he, in common with all men, was most vitally interested.

For whatever Reason, however, Omar, as before said, has never been popular in his own

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

Country, and therefore has been but scantily transmitted abroad. The MSS. of his Poems, mutilated beyond the average Casualties of Oriental Transcription, are so rare in the East as scarce to have reacht Westward at all, in spite of all the acquisitions of Arms and Science. There is no copy at the India House, none at the Bibliothèque Impériale of Paris. We know but of one in England : No. 140 of the Ousely MSS. at the Bodleian, written at Shiraz, A.D. 1460. This contains but 158 Rubáiyát. One in the Asiatic Society's Library at Calcutta (of which we have a Copy), contains (and yet incomplete) 516, though swelled to that by all kinds of Repetition and Corruption. So Von Hammer speaks of *his* Copy as containing about 200, while Dr. Sprenger catalogues the Lucknow MS. at double that Number.¹ The Scribes, too, of the Oxford and Calcutta MSS. seem to do their Work under a sort of Protest ; each beginning with a Tetrastich (whether genuine or not), taken out of its alphabetic order ; the Oxford with one of Apology ; the Calcutta with one of Expostulation, supposed (says a Notice prefixed to the MS.) to have risen from a Dream, in which Omar's mother asked about his future fate. It may be rendered thus :—

¹ ' Since this Paper was written ' (adds the Reviewer in a note), ' we have met with a Copy of a very rare Edition, printed at Calcutta in 1836. This contains 438 Tetrastichs, with an Appendix containing 54 others not found in some MSS.'

OMAR KHAYYÁM

‘Oh Thou who burn’st in Heart for those who burn
In Hell, whose fires thyself shall feed in turn ;
How long be crying, ‘Mercy on them, God !’
Why, who art Thou to teach, and He to learn ?’

The Bodleian Quatrain pleads Pantheism by
way of Justification.

‘If I myself upon a looser Creed
Have loosely strung the Jewel of Good deed,
Let this one thing for my Atonement plead :
That One for Two I never did mis-read.’

The Reviewer, to whom I owe the Particulars of Omar’s Life, concludes his Review by comparing him with Lucretius, both as to natural Temper and Genius, and as acted upon by the Circumstances in which he lived. Both indeed were men of subtle, strong, and cultivated Intellect, fine Imagination, and Hearts passionate for Truth and Justice ; who justly revolted from their Country’s false Religion, and false, or foolish, Devotion to it ; but who yet fell short of replacing what they subverted by such better *Hope* as others, with no better Revelation to guide them, had yet made a Law to themselves. Lucretius, indeed, with such material as Epicurus furnished, satisfied himself with the theory of so vast a machine fortuitously constructed, and acting by a Law that implied no Legislator ; and so composing himself into a Stoical rather than Epicurean severity of Attitude, sat down to contemplate the mechanical Drama of the

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

Universe which he was part Actor in ; himself and all about him (as in his own sublime description of the Roman Theatre) discoloured with the lurid reflex of the Curtain suspended between the Spectator and the Sun. Omar, more desperate, or more careless of any so complicated System as resulted in nothing but hopeless Necessity, flung his own Genius and Learning with a bitter or humorous jest into the general Ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal ; and, pretending sensual pleasure as the serious purpose of Life, only *diverted* himself with speculative problems of Deity, Destiny, Matter and Spirit, Good and Evil, and other such questions, easier to start than to run down, and the pursuit of which becomes a very weary sport at last !

With regard to the present Translation. The original Rubáiyát (as, missing an Arabic Guttural, these *Tetrastichs* are more musically called) are independent Stanzas, consisting each of four Lines of equal, though varied, Prosody ; sometimes *all* rhyming, but oftener (as here imitated) the third line a blank. Something as in the Greek Alcaic, where the penultimate line seems to lift and suspend the Wave that falls over in the last. As usual with such kind of Oriental Verse, the Rubáiyát follow one another according to Alphabetic Rhyme—a strange succession of Grave and Gay. Those here selected are strung into something of an Eclogue,

OMAR KHAYYÁM

with perhaps a less than equal proportion of the 'Drink and make-merry,' which (genuine or not) recurs over-frequently in the Original. Either way, the Result is sad enough : saddest perhaps when most ostentatiously merry : more apt to move Sorrow than Anger toward the old Tent-maker, who, after vainly endeavouring to unshackle his Steps from Destiny, and to catch some authentic Glimpse of To-MORROW, fell back upon To-DAY (which has out-lasting so many To-morrows !) as the only Ground he got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his Feet.

While the present Edition of Omar was preparing, Monsieur Nicolas, French Consul at Rescht, published a very careful and very good Edition of the Text, from a lithograph copy at Teheran, comprising 464 Rubáiyát, with translation and notes of his own.

Mons. Nicolas, whose Edition has reminded me of several things, and instructed me in others, does not consider Omar to be the material Epicurean that I have literally taken him for, but a Mystic, shadowing the Deity under the figure of Wine, Wine-bearer, etc., as Háfiz is supposed to do ; in short, a Súfí Poet like Háfiz and the rest.

I cannot see reason to alter my opinion, formed as it was a dozen years ago when Omar

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

was first shown me by one to whom I am indebted for all I know of Oriental, and very much of other, literature. He admired Omar's Genius so much, that he would gladly have adopted any such Interpretation of his meaning as Mons. Nicolas' if he could.¹ That he could not appears by his Paper in the *Calcutta Review* already so largely quoted; in which he argues from the Poems themselves, as well as from what records remain of the Poet's Life.

And if more were needed to disprove Mons. Nicolas' Theory, there is the Biographical Notice which he himself has drawn up in direct contradiction to the Interpretation of the Poems given in his Notes. Here is one of the Anecdotes he produces. 'Mais revenons à Khéyam, qui, resté étranger à toutes ces alternatives de guerres, d'intrigues, et de révoltes, dont cette époque fut si remplie, vivait tranquille dans son village natal, se livrant avec passion à l'étude de la philosophie des Soufis. Entouré de nombreux amis il cherchait avec eux dans le vin cette contemplation extatique que d'autres croient trouver dans des cris et des hurlemens,' etc. 'Les chroniqueurs persans racontent que Khéyam aimait surtout à s'entretenir et à boire avec ses amis, le soir au clair de la lune sur la terrasse de sa maison, entouré de chanteurs et musiciens,

¹ Perhaps would have edited the Poems himself some years ago. He may now as little approve of my Version on one side, as of Mons. Nicolas' on the other.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

avec un échanton qui, la coupe à la main, la présentait à tour de rôle aux joyeux convives réunis.—Pendant une de ces soirées dont nous venons de parler, survient à l'improviste un coup de vent qui éteint les chandelles et renverse à terre la cruche de vin, placée imprudemment sur le bord de la terrasse. La cruche fut brisée et le vin repandu. Aussitôt Khéyam, irrité, improvisa ce quatrain impie à l'adresse du Tout-Puissant : “Tu as brisé ma cruche de vin, mon Dieu ! tu as ainsi fermé sur moi la porte de la joie, mon Dieu ! c'est moi qui bois, et c'est toi qui commets les désordres de l'ivresse ! oh ! (puisse ma bouche se remplir de la terre !) serais-tu ivre, mon Dieu ?”

‘Le poète, après avoir prononcé ce blasphème, jetant les yeux sur une glace, se serait aperçu que son visage était noir comme du charbon. C'était une punition du ciel. Alors il fit cet autre quatrain non moins audacieux que le premier. “Quel est l'homme ici-bas qui n'a point commis de péché, dis ? Celui qui n'en aurait point commis, comment aurait-il vécu, dis ? Si, parce que je fais du mal, tu me punis par le mal, quelle est donc la différence qui existe entre toi et moi, dis ?”’

I really hardly knew poor Omar was so far gone till his Apologist informed me. Here we see then that, whatever were the Wine that Háfiz drank and sang, the veritable Juice of the Grape it was which Omar used not only when carousing

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

with his friends, but (says Mons. Nicolas) in order to excite himself to that pitch of Devotion which others reached by cries and ‘hurlemens.’ And yet, whenever Wine, Wine-bearer, etc., occur in the Text—which is often enough—Mons. Nicolas carefully annotates ‘Dieu,’ ‘La Divinité,’ etc.: so carefully indeed that one is tempted to think he was indoctrinated by the Súfi with whom he read the Poems. (Note to Rub. ii. p. 8.) A Persian would naturally wish to vindicate a distinguished Countryman ; and a Súfi to enrol him in his own sect, which already comprises all the chief Poets of Persia.

What historical Authority has Mons. Nicolas to show that Omar gave himself up ‘avec passion à l’étude de la philosophie des Soufis’ ? (Preface, p. xiii.) The Doctrines of Pantheism, Materialism, Necessity, etc., were not peculiar to the Súfis ; nor to Lucretius before them ; nor to Epicurus before him ; probably the very original Irreligion of thinking men from the first ; and very likely to be the spontaneous growth of a Philosopher living in an Age of social and political barbarism, under sanction of one of the Two and Seventy Religions supposed to divide the world. Von Hammer (according to Sprenger’s Oriental Catalogue) speaks of Omar as ‘a Free-thinker, and a great opponent of Sufism ;’ perhaps because, while holding much of their Doctrine, he would not pretend to any inconsistent severity of morals. Sir W. Ouseley has written a Note to something

OMAR KHAYYÁM

of the same effect on the fly-leaf of the Bodleian MS. And in two *Rubáiyát* of Mons. Nicolas' own Edition *Súf* and *Súfi* are both disparagingly named.

No doubt many of these Quatrains seem unaccountable unless mystically interpreted ; but many more as unaccountable unless literally. Were the Wine spiritual, for instance, how wash the Body with it when dead ? Why make cups of the dead clay to be filled with—' *La Divinité* ' by some succeeding Mystic ? Mons. Nicolas himself is puzzled by some ' *bizarres* ' and ' *trop Orientales* ' allusions and images—' *d'une sensualité quelquefois révoltante* ' indeed—which ' *les convenances* ' do not permit him to translate ; but still which the reader cannot but refer to ' *La Divinité* .'¹ No doubt also many of the Quatrains in the *Teheran*, as in the *Calcutta*, Copies, are spurious ; such *Rubáiyát* being the common form of Epigram in Persia. But this, at best, tells as much one way as another ; nay, the *Súfi*, who may be considered the Scholar and Man of Letters

¹ A Note to Quatrain 234 admits that, however clear the mystical meaning of such Images must be to Europeans, they are not quoted without ' *rougissant* ' even by laymen in Persia—' *Quant aux termes de tendresse qui commencent ce quatrain, comme tant d'autres dans ce recueil, nos lecteurs, habitués maintenant à l'étrangeté des expressions si souvent employés par Khéyam pour rendre ses pensées sur l'amour divin, et à la singularité des images trop orientales, d'une sensualité quelquefois révoltante, n'auront pas de peine à se persuader qu'il s'agit de la Divinité, bien que cette conviction soit vivement discutée par les mollahs musulmans, et même par beaucoup de laïques, qui rougissent véritablement d'une pareille licence de leur compatriote à l'égard des choses spirituelles.* '

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

in Persia, would be far more likely than the careless Epicure to interpolate what favours his own view of the Poet. I observe that very few of the more mystical Quatrains are in the Bodleian MS., which must be one of the oldest, as dated at Shiraz, A.H. 865, A.D. 1460. And this, I think, especially distinguishes Omar (I cannot help calling him by his—no, not Christian—familiar name) from all other Persian Poets : That, whereas with them the Poet is lost in his Song, the Man in Allegory and Abstraction ; we seem to have the Man—the *Bonhomme*—Omar himself, with all his Humours and Passions, as frankly before us as if we were really at Table with him, after the Wine had gone round.

I must say that I, for one, never wholly believed in the Mysticism of Háfiz. It does not appear there was any danger in holding and singing Súfi Pantheism, so long as the Poet made his Salaam to Mohammed at the beginning and end of his Song. Under such conditions Jeláluddín, Jámi, Attár, and others sang ; using Wine and Beauty indeed as Images to illustrate, not as a Mask to hide, the Divinity they were celebrating. Perhaps some Allegory less liable to mistake or abuse had been better among so inflammable a People : much more so when, as some think with Háfiz and Omar, the abstract is not only likened to, but identified with, the sensual Image ; hazardous, if not to the Devotee himself, yet to his weaker Brethren ; and worse for the

OMAR KHAYYÁM

Profane in proportion as the Devotion of the Initiated grew warmer. And all for what? To be tantalized with Images of sensual enjoyment which must be renounced if one would approximate a God, who, according to the Doctrine, *is* Sensual Matter as well as Spirit, and into whose Universe one expects unconsciously to merge after Death, without hope of any posthumous Beatitude in another world to compensate for all the self-denial of this. Lucretius' blind Divinity certainly merited, and probably got, as much self-sacrifice as this of the Súfi; and the burden of Omar's Song—if not 'Let us eat'—is assuredly—'Let us drink, for To-morrow we die!' And if Háfiz meant quite otherwise by a similar language, he surely miscalculated when he devoted his Life and Genius to so equivocal a Psalmody as, from his Day to this, has been said and sung by any rather than spiritual Worshippers.

However, it may remain an Open Question, both with regard to Háfiz and Omar: the reader may understand them either way, literally or mystically, as he chooses. Whenever Wine, Wine-bearer, Cypress, etc., are named, he has only to suppose 'La Divinité;' and when he has done so with Omar, I really think he may proceed to the same Interpretation of Anacreon—and even Anacreon Moore.

RUBÁIYÁT

OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR

I.

WAKE ! For the Sun behind yon Eastern height
Has chased the Session of the Stars from Night ;
And, to the field of Heav'n ascending, strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

II.

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,
‘ When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why lags the drowsy Worshipper outside ? ’

III.

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted—‘ Open then the door !
You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more.’

RUBÁIYÁT OF

IV.

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the
Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the ground suspires.

V.

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,
And Jamshýd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one
knows ;
But still a Ruby gushes from the Vine,
And many a Garden by the Water blows.

VI.

And David's lips are lockt ; but in divine
High-piping Péhlevi, with 'Wine ! Wine !
Wine !
Red Wine !—the Nightingale cries to the
Rose
That sallow cheek of her's to incarnadine.

VII.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling :
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

VIII.

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

IX.

Morning a thousand Roses brings, you say ;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of yesterday ?
And this first Summer month that brings the
Rose
Shall take Jamshýd and Kaikobád away.

X.

Well, let it take them ! What have we to do
With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú ?
Let Rustum cry ' To Battle ! ' as he likes,
Or Hátim Tai ' To Supper ! '—heed not you.

XI.

With me along the strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultán is forgot—
And Peace to Máhmúd on his golden Throne !

XII.

Here with a little Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow !

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XIII.

Some for the Glories of This World ; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come ;
 Ah, take the Cash, and let the Promise go,
Nor heed the music of a Distant Drum !

XIV.

Were it not Folly, Spider-like to spin
The Thread of present Life away to win—
 What ? for ourselves, who know not if we
 shall
Breathe out the very Breath we now breathe in !

XV.

Look to the blowing Rose about us—‘ Lo,
Laughing,’ she says, ‘ into the world I blow :
 At once the silken tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.’

XVI.

For those who husbanded the Golden grain,
And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,
 Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

XVII.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers ; and anon,
 Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two—was gone.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XVIII.

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his destin'd Hour, and went his way.

XIX.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshýd gloried and drank
deep :
And Bahrá'm, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

XX.

The Palace that to Heav'n his pillars threw,
And Kings the forehead on his threshold drew—
I saw the solitary Ringdove there,
And 'Coo, coo, coo,' she cried ; and 'Coo, coo,
coo.'

XXI.

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears
To-DAY of past Regret and future Fears :
To-morrow !—Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

XXII.

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time has prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

RUBAIYÁT OF

XXIII.

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend, ourselves to make a Couch—for whom?

XXIV.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled ;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

XXV.

And this delightful Herb whose living Green
Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly ! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen !

XXVI.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend ;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans
End !

XXVII.

Alike for those who for To-DAY prepare,
And those that after some To-MORROW stare,
A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries,
'Fools ! your Reward is neither Here nor
There !'

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XXVIII.

Another Voice, when I am sleeping, cries,
'The Flower should open with the Morning skies.'
And a retreating Whisper, as I wake—
'The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.'

XXIX.

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd
Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to
Scorn
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with
Dust.

XXX.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about : but evermore
Came out by the same door as in I went.

XXXI.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with my own hand wrought to make it grow :
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd—
'I came like Water, and like Wind I go.'

XXXII.

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing,
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing :
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XXXIII.

What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence* ?
And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence !
Ah, contrite Heav'n endowed us with the Vine
To drug the memory of that insolence !

XXXIV.

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many Knots unravel'd by the Road ;
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

XXXV.

There was the Door to which I found no Key :
There was the Veil through which I could not
see :
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There was—and then no more of THEE and ME.

XXXVI.

Earth could not answer : nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn ;
Nor Heaven, with those eternal Signs reveal'd
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

XXXVII.

Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind
The Veil of Universe I cried to find
A Lamp to guide me through the darkness; and
Something then said—' An Understanding blind.'

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XXXVIII.

Then to the Lip of this poor earthen Urn
I lean'd, the secret Well of Life to learn :
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—'While you live,
Drink !—for, once dead, you never shall return.'

XXXIX.

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answer'd, once did live,
And drink ; and that impassive Lip I kiss'd,
How many Kisses might it take—and give !

XL.

For I remember stopping by the way
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay :
And with its all-obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd—' Gently, Brother, gently, pray !'

XLI.

For has not such a Story from of Old
Down Man's successive generations roll'd
Of such a clod of saturated Earth
Cast by the Maker into Human mould ?

XLII.

And not a drop that from our Cups we throw
On the parcht herbage but may steal below
To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye
There hidden—far beneath, and long ago.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XLIII.

As then the Tulip for her wonted sup
Of Heavenly Vintage lifts her chalice up,
Do you, twin offspring of the soil, till Heav'n
To Earth invert you like an empty Cup.

XLIV.

Do you, within your little hour of Grace,
The waving Cypress in your Arms enlace,
Before the Mother back into her arms
Fold, and dissolve you in a last embrace.

XLV.

And if the Cup you drink, the Lip you press,
End in what All begins and ends in—Yes ;
Imagine then you *are* what heretofore
You *were*—hereafter you shall not be less.

XLVI.

So when at last the Angel of the drink
Of Darkness finds you by the river-brink,
And, proffering his Cup, invites your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff it—do not shrink.

XLVII.

And fear not lest Existence closing *your*
Account, should lose, or know the type no more ;
The Eternal Sáki from that Bowl has pour'd
Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XLVIII.

When You and I behind the Veil are past,
Oh but the long long while the World shall last,
Which of our Coming and Departure heeds
As much as Ocean of a pebble-cast.

XLIX.

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
The Stars are setting, and the Caravan
Draws to the Dawn of Nothing—Oh make haste !

L.

Would you that spangle of Existence spend
About THE SECRET—quick about it, Friend !
A Hair, they say, divides the False and True—
And upon what, prithee, does Life depend ?

LI.

A Hair, they say, divides the False and True ;
Yes ; and a single Alif were the clue,
Could you but find it, to the Treasure-house,
And peradventure to THE MASTER too ;

LII.

Whose secret Presence, through Creation's veins
Running, Quicksilver-like eludes your pains :
Taking all shapes from Máh to Máhi ; and
They change and perish all—but He remains ;

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LIII.

A moment guess'd—then back behind the Fold
Immerst of Darkness round the Drama roll'd
Which, for the Pastime of Eternity,
He does Himself contrive, enact, behold.

LIV.

But if in vain, down on the stubborn floor
Of Earth, and up to Heav'n's unopening Door,
You gaze To-day, while You are You—how
then
To-morrow, You when shall be You no more ?

LV.

Oh, plagued no more with Human or Divine,
To-morrow's tangle to itself resign,
And lose your fingers in the tresses of
The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.

LVI.

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute ;
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

LVII.

You know, my Friends, how bravely in my House
For a new Marriage I did make Carouse :
Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

LVIII.

For 'Is' and 'IS-NOT' though with Rule and Line,
And 'UP-AND-DOWN' by Logic I define,
Of all that one should care to fathom, I
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

LIX.

Ah, but my Computations, People say,
Have squared the Year to human compass, eh ?
If so, by striking from the Calendar
Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday.

LX.

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder ; and
He bid me taste of it ; and 'twas—the Grape !

LXI.

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute :
The sovereign Alchemist that in a trice
Life's leaden metal into Gold transmute :

LXII.

The mighty Mahmúd, Allah-breathing Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters before him with his whirlwind Sword.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LXIII.

Why, be this Juice the growth of God, who dare
BlaspHEME the twisted tendril as a Snare ?

A Blessing, we should use it, should we not ?
And if a Curse—why, then, Who set it there ?

LXIV.

I must abjure the Balm of Life, I must,
Scared by some After-reckoning ta'en on trust,
Or lured with Hope of some Diviner Drink,
When the frail Cup is crumbled into Dust !

LXV.

If but the Vine and Love-abjuring Band
Are in the Prophet's Paradise to stand,
Alack, I doubt the Prophet's Paradise
Were empty as the hollow of one's Hand.

LXVI.

Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise !
One thing at least is certain—*This* Life flies :
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies ;
The Flower that once is blown for ever dies.

LXVII.

Strange, is it not ? that of the myriads who
Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

LXVIII.

The Revelations of Devout and Learn'd
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burn'd,
Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep
They told their fellows, and to Sleep return'd.

LXIX.

Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
Is't not a shame—is't not a shame for him
So long in this Clay suburb to abide !

LXX.

But that is but a Tent wherein may rest
A Sultan to the realm of Death address ;
The Sultan rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another guest.

LXXI.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell :
And after many days my Soul return'd
And said, ' Behold, Myself am Heav'n and Hell :

LXXII.

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow of a Soul on fire,
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,
So late emerg'd from, shall so soon expire.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LXXIII.

We are no other than a moving row
Of visionary Shapes that come and go
 Round with this Sun-illumin'd Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show ;

LXXIV.

Impotent Pieces of the Game he plays
Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days ;
 Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays ;
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

LXXV.

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes ;
 And He that toss'd you down into the Field,
He knows about it all—*HE* knows—*HE* knows !

LXXVI.

The Moving Finger writes ; and, having writ,
Moves on : nor all your Piety nor Wit
 Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

LXXVII.

For let Philosopher and Doctor preach
Of what they will, and what they will not—each
 Is but one Link in an Eternal Chain
That none can slip, nor break, nor over-reach.

OMAR KHAYYAM

LXXVIII.

And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,
Lift not your hands to *It* for help—for *It*
As impotently rolls as you or I.

LXXIX.

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man
knead,
And there of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed :
And the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

LXXX.

Yesterday *This* Day's Madness did prepare :
To-morrow's Silence, Triumph, or Despair :
Drink ! for you know not whence you came,
nor why :
Drink ! for you know not why you go, nor where.

LXXXI.

I tell you this—When, started from the Goal,
Over the flaming shoulders of the Foal
Of Heav'n Parwīn and Mushtari they flung,
In my predestin'd Plot of Dust and Soul

LXXXII.

The Vine had struck a fibre : which about
If clings my Being—let the Dervish flout ;
Of my Base metal may be filed a Key,
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LXXXIII.

And this I know : whether the one True Light,
Kindle to Love, or Wrath-consume me quite,
One Flash of It within the Tavern caught,
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

LXXXIV.

What ! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
A conscious Something to resent the yoke
Of unpermitted Pleasure, under pain
Of Everlasting Penalties, if broke !

LXXXV.

What ! from his helpless Creature be repaid
Pure Gold for what he lent us dross-allay'd—
Sue for a Debt we never did contract,
And cannot answer—Oh the sorry trade !

LXXXVI.

Nay, but, for terror of his wrathful Face,
I swear I will not call Injustice Grace ;
Not one Good Fellow of the Tavern but
Would kick so poor a Coward from the place.

LXXXVII.

Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestin'd Evil round
Emmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin ?

OMAR KHAYYÁM

LXXXVIII.

Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake :
For all the Sin the Face of wretched Man
Is black with—Man's Forgiveness give—and take !

LXXXIX.

As under cover of departing Day
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away,
Once more within the Potter's house alone
I stood, surrounded by the Shapes of Clay.

XC.

And once again there gather'd a scarce heard
Whisper among them ; as it were, the stirr'd
Ashes of some all but extinguisht Tongue,
Which mine ear kindled into living Word.

XCI.

Said one among them—‘ Surely not in vain,
My Substance from the common Earth was ta’en,
That He who subtly wrought me into Shape
Should stamp me back to shapeless Earth again ? ’

XCII.

Another said—' Why, ne'er a peevish Boy
Would break the Cup from which he drank in Joy;
Shall He that of his own free Fancy made
The Vessel, in an after-rage destroy !'

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XCIII.

None answer'd this ; but after silence spake
Some Vessel of a more ungainly Make ;
‘ They sneer at me for leaning all awry ;
What ! did the Hand then of the Potter shake ? ’

XCIV.

Thus with the Dead as with the Living, *What ?*
And *Why ?* so ready, but the *Wherefor* not,
One on a sudden peevishly exclaim'd,
‘ Which is the Potter, pray, and which the Pot ? ’

XCV.

Said one—‘ Folks of a surly Master tell,
And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell ;
They talk of some sharp Trial of us—Pish !
He's a Good Fellow, and 'twill all be well. ’

XCVI.

‘ Well,’ said another, ‘ Whoso will, let try,
My Clay with long oblivion is gone dry :
But fill me with the old familiar Juice,
Methinks I might recover by-and-bye ! ’

XCVII.

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,
One spied the little Crescent all were seeking :
And then they jogg'd each other, ‘ Brother !
Brother !
Now for the Porter's shoulder-knot a-creaking ! ’

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XCVIII.

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash my Body whence the Life has died,
And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,
By some not unfrequented Garden-side.

XCIX.

Whither resorting from the vernal Heat
Shall Old Acquaintance Old Acquaintance greet,
Under the Branch that leans above the Wall
To shed his Blossom over head and feet.

C.

Then ev'n my buried Ashes such a snare
Of Vintage shall fling up into the Air,
As not a True-believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

CI.

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my credit in Men's eye much wrong :
Have drown'd my Glory in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

CII.

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore—but was I sober when I swore ?
And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-
hand
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

CIII.

And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel,
And robb'd me of my Robe of Honour—Well,
I often wonder what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the ware they sell.

CIV.

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose !
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should
close !

The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows !

CV.

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed reveal'd,
Toward which the fainting Traveller might
spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field !

CVI.

Oh if the World were but to re-create,
That we might catch ere closed the Book of Fate,
And make The Writer on a fairer leaf
Inscribe our names, or quite obliterate !

CVII.

Better, oh better, cancel from the Scroll
Of Universe one luckless Human Soul,
Than drop by drop enlarge the Flood that rolls
Hoarser with Anguish as the Ages roll.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

CVIII.

Ah Love ! could you and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire !

CIX.

But see ! The rising Moon of Heav'n again
Looks for us, Sweet-heart, through the quivering
Plane :
How oft hereafter rising will she look
Among those leaves—for one of us in vain !

CX.

And when Yourself with silver Foot shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in your joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made One—turn down an empty Glass !

TAMÁM

NOTES

(Stanza II.) The '*False Dawn*;' *Subhi Kázib*, a transient Light on the Horizon about an hour before the *Subhi sádik*, or True Dawn; a well-known Phenomenon in the East.

(iv.) New Year. Beginning with the Vernal Equinox, it must be remembered; and (howsoever the old Solar Year is practically superseded by the clumsy *Lunar* Year that dates from the Moham-medan Hijra) still commemorated by a Festival that is said to have been appointed by the very Jamshyd whom Omar so often talks of, and whose yearly Calendar he helped to rectify.

'The sudden approach and rapid advance of the Spring,' says Mr. Binning, 'are very striking. Before the Snow is well off the Ground, the Trees burst into Blossom, and the Flowers start from the Soil. At *Naw Rooz* (*their* New Year's Day) the Snow was lying in patches on the Hills and in the shaded Vallies, while the Fruit-trees in the Garden were budding beautifully, and green Plants and Flowers springing upon the Plains on every side—

'And on old Hyems' Chin and icy Crown
An odorous Chaplet of sweet Summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set—'

Among the Plants newly appear'd I recognized some old Acquaintances I had not seen for many a Year: among these, two varieties of the Thistle; a coarse species of the Daisy, like the Horse-gowan; red and white Clover; the Dock; the blue Corn-flower; and that vulgar Herb the Dandelion rearing its yellow crest on the Banks of the Watercourses.' The Nightingale was not yet heard, for the Rose was not yet blown: but an almost identical Blackbird and Woodpecker helped to make up something of a North-country Spring.

(iv.) Exodus iv. 6; where Moses draws forth his Hand—not,

NOTES

according to the Persians, '*leprous as Snow*,'—but *white*, as our May-Blossom in Spring perhaps. According to them also the Healing Power of Jesus resided in his Breath.

(v.) Iram, planted by King Shaddád, and now sunk somewhere in the Sands of Arabia. Jamshyd's Seven-ring'd Cup was typical of the 7 Heavens, 7 Planets, 7 Seas, &c., and was a *Divining Cup*.

(vi.) *Péhlevi*, the old Heroic *Sanskrit* of Persia. Háfiz also speaks of the Nightingale's *Péhlevi*, which did not change with the People's.

(vi.) I am not sure if this refers to the Red Rose looking sickly, or the Yellow Rose that ought to be Red; Red, White, and Yellow Roses all common in Persia. I think Southey, in his *Common-Place Book*, quotes from some Spanish author about a Rose being White till 10 o'clock; '*Rosa perfecta*' at 2; and '*perfecta incarnada*' at 5.

(x.) Rustum, the '*Hercules*' of Persia, whose exploits are among the most celebrated in the *Sháh-náma*. Hátim Tai, a well-known Type of Oriental Generosity.

(xiii.) A Drum—beaten outside a Palace.

(xv.) That is, the Rose's Golden Centre.

(xix.) Persepolis: call'd also *Takht'i Jamshyd*—THE THRONE OF JAMSHYD, '*King Splendid*,' of the mythical *Peeshdádian* Dynasty, and supposed (according to the *Sháh-náma*) to have been founded and built by him. Others refer it to the Work of the Genie King, Ján Ibn Ján—who also built the Pyramids—before the time of Adam.

BAHRÁM GÚR—*Bahrám of the Wild Ass*—a Sassanian Sovereign—had also his Seven Castles (like the King of Bohemia!) each of a different Colour; each with a Royal Mistress within; each of whom tells him a Story, as told in one of the most famous Poems of Persia, written by Amír Khusraw: all these Sevens also figuring (according to Eastern Mysticism) the Seven Heavens, and perhaps the Book itself that Eighth, into which the mystical Seven transcend, and within which they revolve. The Ruins of Three of these Towers are yet shown by the Peasantry; as also the Swamp in which Bahrám sunk, like the Master of Ravenswood, while pursuing his *Gúr*.

(xx.) This Quatrain Mr. Binning found, among several of Háfiz and others, inscribed by some stray hand among the ruins of Persepolis. The Ringdove's ancient *Péhlevi*, *Coo, Coo, Coo*, signifies also in Persian '*Where? Where? Where?*' In Attár's '*Bird-parliament*' she is reproved by the Leader of the Birds for sitting still, and for ever harping on that one note of lamentation for her lost Yúsuf.

(xxi.) A thousand years to each Planet.

NOTES

(xxxiv.) Saturn, Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

(xxxv.) ME-AND-THEE : some dividual Existence or Personality distinct from the Whole.

(xlii.) The custom of throwing a little Wine on the ground before drinking still continues in Persia, and perhaps generally in the East. Mons. Nicolas considers it 'un signe de libéralité, et en même temps un avertissement que le buveur doit vider sa coupe jusqu'à la dernière goutte.' Is it not more likely an ancient Superstition ; a Libation to propitiate Earth, or make her an Accomplice in the illicit Revel ? Or, perhaps, to divert the Jealous Eye by some sacrifice of superfluity, as with the Ancients of the West ? With Omar we see something more is signified ; the precious Liquor is not lost, but sinks into the ground to refresh the dust of some poor Wine-worshipper foregone.

Thus Háfiz, copying Omar in so many ways : 'When thou drinkest Wine pour a draught on the ground. Wherefore fear the Sin which brings to another Gain ?'

(xlii.) According to one beautiful Oriental Legend, Azrâel accomplishes his mission by holding to the nostril an Apple from the Tree of Life.

(xlix.) The Caravans travelling by night, after the Vernal Equinox—their New Year's Day. This was ordered by Mohammed himself, I believe.

(lii.) From Máh to Máhi ; from Fish to Moon.

(lviii.) A Jest, of course, at his Studies. A curious mathematical Quatrain of Omar's has been pointed out to me ; the more curious because almost exactly parallel'd by some Verses of Doctor Donne's, and quoted in Izaak Walton's Lives ! Here is Omar : 'You and I are the image of a pair of compasses ; though we have two heads (sc. our *feet*) we have one body ; when we have fixed the centre for our circle, we bring our heads (sc. *feet*) together at the end.' Dr. Donne :

If we be two, we two are so
As stiff twin-compasses are two ;
Thy Soul, the fixt foot, makes no show
To move, but does if the other do.

And though thine in the centre sit,
Yet when my other far does roam,
Thine leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as mine comes home.

NOTES

Such thou must be to me, who must
Like the other foot obliquely run ;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And me to end where I begun.

(LXI.) The Seventy-two Religions supposed to divide the World : including Islamism, as some think : but others not.

(LXII.) Alluding to Sultan Mahmúd's Conquest of India and its dark people.

(LXXIII.) *Fánúsi khiyál*, a Magic-lanthorn still used in India ; the cylindrical Interior being painted with various Figures, and so lightly poised and ventilated as to revolve round the lighted Candle within.

(LXXV.) A very mysterious Line in the Original :

O dánad O dánad O dánad O ——

breaking off something like our Wood-pigeon's Note, which she is said to take up just where she left off.

(LXXXI.) Parwín and Mushtari—The Pleiads and Jupiter.

(xcvii.) At the Close of the Fasting Month, Ramazán (which makes the Musulman unhealthy and unamiable), the first Glimpse of the New Moon (who rules their Division of the Year), is looked for with the utmost Anxiety, and hailed with Acclamation. Then it is that the Porter's Knot may be heard—toward the *Cellar*, perhaps. Omar has elsewhere a pretty Quatrain about this same Moon—

‘Be of Good Cheer—the sullen Month will die,
And a young Moon requite us by and bye :
Look how the Old one, meagre, bent, and wan
With Age and Fast, is fainting from the Sky !’

RUBÁIYAT
OF
OMAR KHAYYÁM

THIRD EDITION

1872

OMAR KHAYYÁM

THE

ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

OMAR KHAYYÁM was born at Naishápúr in Khorassán in the latter half of our Eleventh, and died within the First Quarter of our Twelfth Century. The slender Story of his Life is curiously twined about that of two other very considerable Figures in their Time and Country: one of whom tells the Story of all Three. This was Nizám ul Mulk, Vizyr to Alp Arslan the Son, and Malik Shah the Grandson, of Toghrul Beg the Tartar, who had wrested Persia from the feeble Successor of Mahmúd the Great, and founded that Seljukian Dynasty which finally roused Europe into the Crusades. This Nizám ul Mulk, in his *Wasiyat*—or *Testament*—which he wrote and left as a Memorial for future statesmen—relates the following, as quoted in the *Calcutta Review*, No. lix., from Mirkhond's *History of the Assassins*.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

“One of the greatest of the wise men of Khorassán was the Imám Mowaffak of Naishápúr, a man highly honoured and revered,—may God rejoice his soul ; his illustrious years exceeded eighty-five, and it was the universal belief that every boy who read the Koran or studied the traditions in his presence, would assuredly attain to honour and happiness. For this cause did my father send me from Tús to Naishápúr with Abd-us-samad, the doctor of law, that I might employ myself in study and learning under the guidance of that illustrious teacher. Towards me he ever turned an eye of favour and kindness, and as his pupil I felt for him extreme affection and devotion, so that I passed four years in his service. When I first came there, I found two other pupils of mine own age newly arrived, Hakim Omar Khayyám, and the ill-fated Ben Sabbáh. Both were endowed with sharpness of wit and the highest natural powers ; and we three formed a close friendship together. When the Imám rose from his lectures, they used to join me, and we repeated to each other the lessons we had heard. Now Omar was a native of Naishápúr, while Hasan Ben Sabbáh’s father was one Ali, a man of austere life and practice, but heretical in his creed and doctrine. One day Hasan said to me and to Khayyám, ‘It is a universal belief that the pupils of the Imám Mowaffak will attain to fortune. Now, even if we *all* do not attain thereto, without doubt one

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

of us will ; what then shall be our mutual pledge and bond ?' We answered, 'Be it what you please.' 'Well,' he said, 'let us make a vow, that to whomsoever this fortune falls, he shall share it equally with the rest, and reserve no pre-eminence for himself.' 'Be it so,' we both replied, and on those terms we mutually pledged our words. Years rolled on, and I went from Khorassán to Transoxiana, and wandered to Ghazni and Cabul ; and when I returned, I was invested with office, and rose to be administrator of affairs during the Sultanate of Sultan Alp Arslán."

'He goes on to state, that years passed by, and both his old school-friends found him out, and came and claimed a share in his good fortune, according to the school-day vow. The Vizier was generous and kept his word. Hasan demanded a place in the government, which the Sultan granted at the Vizier's request ; but discontented with a gradual rise, he plunged into the maze of intrigue of an oriental court, and, failing in a base attempt to supplant his benefactor, he was disgraced and fell. After many mishaps and wanderings, Hasan became the head of the Persian sect of the *Ismalians*,—a party of fanatics who had long murmured in obscurity, but rose to an evil eminence under the guidance of his strong and evil will. In A.D. 1090, he seized the castle of Alamút, in the province of Rúdbar, which lies in the mountainous tract, south of the Caspian Sea : and it was from this mountain

OMAR KHAYYÁM

home he obtained that evil celebrity among the Crusaders as the OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS, and spread terror through the Mohammedan world ; and it is yet disputed whether the word *Assassin*, which they have left in the language of modern Europe as their dark memorial, is derived from the *hashish* or opiate of hemp-leaves (the Indian *bhang*), with which they maddened themselves to the sullen pitch of oriental desperation, or from the name of the founder of the dynasty, whom we have seen in his quiet collegiate days at Naishápúr. One of the countless victims of the Assassin's dagger was Nizám ul Mulk himself, the old school-boy friend.¹

‘Omar Khayyám also came to the Vizier to claim the share ; but not to ask for title or office. “The greatest boon you can confer on me,” he said, “is to let me live in a corner under the shadow of your fortune, to spread wide the advantages of Science, and pray for your long life and prosperity.” The Vizier tells us, that, when he found Omar was really sincere in his refusal, he pressed him no further, but granted him a yearly pension of 1200 *mithkáls* of gold, from the treasury of Naishápúr.

¹ Some of Omar's Rubáiyát warn us of the danger of Greatness, the instability of Fortune, and while advocating Charity to all Men, recommending us to be too intimate with none. Attár makes Nizám ul Mulk use the very words of his friend Omar [Rub. xxviii.], ‘When Nizám ul Mulk was in the Agony (of Death) he said, “Oh God ! I am passing away in the hand of the Wind.”’

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

‘At Naishápúr thus lived and died Omar Khayyám, “busied,” adds the Vizier “in winning knowledge of every kind, and especially in Astronomy, wherein he attained to a very high pre-eminence. Under the Sultanate of Malik Shah, he came to Merv, and obtained great praise for his proficiency in science, and the Sultan showered favours upon him.”

‘When Malik Shah determined to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight learned men employed to do it; the result was the *Jaláli* era (so called from *Jalál-ud-din*, one of the king’s names)—“a computation of time,” says Gibbon, “which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style.” He is also the author of some astronomical tables, entitled *Ziji-Maliksháhí*,’ and the French have lately republished and translated an Arabic Treatise of his on Algebra.

‘His Takhallus or poetical name (Khayyám) signifies a Tent-maker, and he is said to have at one time exercised that trade, perhaps before Nizám ul Mulk’s generosity raised him to independence. Many Persian poets similarly derive their names from their occupations; thus we have Attár, “a druggist,” Assár, an oil presser,” etc.¹ Omar himself alludes to his name in the following whimsical lines :—

¹ Though all these, like our Smiths, Archers, Millers, Fletchers, etc., may simply retain the Surname of an hereditary calling.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

“Khayyám, who stitched the tents of science,
Has fallen in grief's furnace and been suddenly burned ;
The shears of Fate have cut the tent ropes of his life,
And the broker of Hope has sold him for nothing !”

‘We have only one more anecdote to give of his Life, and that relates to the close ; it is told in the anonymous preface which is sometimes prefixed to his poems ; it has been printed in the Persian in the appendix to Hyde's *Veterum Persarum Religio*, p. 499 ; and D'Herbelot alludes to it in his *Bibliothèque*, under *Khiam* :¹—

“It is written in the chronicles of the ancients that this King of the Wise, Omar Khayyám, died at Naishápúr in the year of the Hegira, 517 (A.D. 1123) ; in science he was unrivalled,—the very paragon of his age. Khwájah Nizámi of Samarcand, who was one of his pupils, relates the following story : ‘I often used to hold conversations with my teacher, Omar Khayyám, in a garden ; and one day he said to me, “My tomb shall be in a spot where the north wind may scatter roses over it.” I wondered at the words he spake, but I knew that his were no idle words.’² Years after, when I chanced to revisit

¹ ‘Philosophe Musulman qui a vécu en Odeur de Sainteté vers la Fin du premier et le Commencement du second Siècle,’ no part of which, except the ‘Philosophe,’ can apply to *our* Khayyám.

² The Rashness of the Words, according to D'Herbelot, consisted in being so opposed to those in the Korán : ‘No Man knows where he shall die.’—This story of Omar reminds me of another so naturally—and, when one remembers how wide of his humble mark the noble sailor aimed—so pathetically told by Captain Cook—not by Doctor Hawkesworth—in his *Second Voyage*. When

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

Naishápúr, I went to his final resting-place, and lo ! it was just outside a garden, and trees laden with fruit stretched their boughs over the garden wall, and dropped their flowers upon his tomb, so as the stone was hidden under them.' ”

Thus far — without fear of Trespass — from the *Calcutta Review*. The writer of it, on reading in India this story of Omar's Grave, was reminded, he says, of Cicero's Account of finding Archimedes' Tomb at Syracuse, buried in grass and weeds. I think Thorwaldsen desired to have roses grow over him ; a wish religiously fulfilled for him to the present day, I believe. However, to return to Omar.

Though the Sultan 'shower'd Favours upon him,' Omar's Epicurean Audacity of Thought and Speech caused him to be regarded askance in his own Time and Country. He is said to have been especially hated and dreaded by the Súfis, whose Practice he ridiculed, and whose Faith amounts to little more than his own when stript of the Mysticism and formal recognition of Islamism under which Omar would not hide.

leaving Ulietea, 'Oreo's last request was for me to return. When he saw he could not obtain that promise, he asked me the name of my *Marai*—Burying place. As strange a question as this was, I hesitated not a moment, to tell him "Stepney," the parish in which I live when in London. I was made to repeat it several times over till they could pronounce it ; and then "Stepney Marai no Tootee" was echoed through a hundred mouths at once. I afterwards found the same question had been put to Mr. Forster by a man on shore ; but he gave a different and indeed more proper answer, by saying, "No man who used the sea could say where he should be buried."

OMAR KHAYYÁM

Their Poets, including Háfiz, who are (with the exception of Firdausi) the most considerable in Persia, borrowed largely, indeed, of Omar's material, but turning it to a mystical Use more convenient to Themselves and the People they addressed ; a People quite as quick of Doubt as of Belief ; as keen of Bodily Sense as of Intellectual ; and delighting in a cloudy composition of both, in which they could float luxuriously between Heaven and Earth, and this World and the Next, on the wings of a poetical expression, that might serve indifferently for either. Omar was too honest of Heart as well as of Head for this. Having failed (however mistakenly) of finding any Providence but Destiny, and any World but This, he set about making the most of it ; preferring rather to soothe the Soul through the Senses into Acquiescence with Things as he saw them, than to perplex it with vain disquietude after what they *might be*. It has been seen, however, that his Worldly Ambition was not exorbitant ; and he very likely takes a humorous or perverse pleasure in exalting the gratification of Sense above that of the Intellect, in which he must have taken great delight, although it failed to answer the Questions in which he, in common with all men, was most vitally interested.

For whatever Reason, however, Omar, as before said, has never been popular in his own Country, and therefore has been but scantily transmitted abroad. The MSS. of his

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

Poems, mutilated beyond the average Casualties of Oriental Transcription, are so rare in the East as scarce to have reacht Westward at all, in spite of all the acquisitions of Arms and Science. There is no copy at the India House, none at the Bibliothèque Impériale of Paris. We know but of one in England : No. 140 of the Ouseley MSS. at the Bodleian, written at Shiraz, A.D. 1460. This contains but 158 Rubáiyát. One in the Asiatic Society's Library at Calcutta (of which we have a Copy), contains (and yet incomplete) 516, though swelled to that by all kinds of Repetition and Corruption. So Von Hammer speaks of *his* Copy as containing about 200, while Doctor Sprenger catalogues the Lucknow MS. at double that Number¹ The Scribes, too, of the Oxford and Calcutta MSS. seem to do their Work under a sort of Protest ; each beginning with a Tetrastich (whether genuine or not), taken out of its alphabetical order ; the Oxford with one of Apology ; the Calcutta with one of Expostulation, supposed (says a Notice prefixed to the MS.) to have risen from a Dream, in which Omar's mother asked about his future fate. It may be rendered thus :—

‘ Oh Thou who burn'st in Heart for those who burn
In Hell, whose fires thyself shall feed in turn ;
How long be crying, “ Mercy on them, God ! ”
Why, who art Thou to teach, and He to learn ? ’

¹ ‘ Since this Paper was written ’ (adds the Reviewer in a note),
‘ we have met with a Copy of a very rare Edition, printed at

OMAR KHAYYÁM

The Bodleian Quatrain pleads Pantheism by way of Justification.

‘ If I myself upon a looser Creed
Have loosely strung the Jewel of Good deed,
Let this one thing for my Atonement plead :
That One for Two I never did mis-read.”

The Reviewer, to whom I owe the Particulars of Omar's Life, concludes his Review by comparing him with Lucretius, both as to natural Temper and Genius, and as acted upon by the Circumstances in which he lived. Both indeed were men of subtle, strong, and cultivated Intellect, fine Imagination, and Hearts passionate for Truth and Justice ; who justly revolted from their Country's false Religion, and false, or foolish, Devotion to it ; but who yet fell short of replacing what they subverted by such better *Hope* as others, with no better revelation to guide them, had yet made a Law to themselves. Lucretius, indeed, with such material as Epicurus furnished, satisfied himself with the theory of so vast a machine fortuitously constructed, and acting by a Law that implied no Legislator ; and so composing himself into a Stoical rather than Epicurean severity of Attitude, sat down to contemplate the mechanical Drama of the Universe which he was part Actor in ; himself and all about him (as in his own sublime descrip-

Calcutta in 1836. This contains 438 Tetrastichs, with an Appendix containing 54 others not found in some MSS.’

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

tion of the Roman Theatre) discoloured with the lurid reflex of the Curtain suspended between the Spectator and the Sun. Omar, more desperate, or more careless of any so complicated System as resulted in nothing but hopeless Necessity, flung his own Genius and Learning with a bitter or humorous jest into the general Ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal ; and, pretending sensual pleasure as the serious purpose of Life, only *diverted* himself with speculative problems of Deity, Destiny, Matter and Spirit, Good and Evil, and other such questions, easier to start than to run down, and the pursuit of which becomes a very weary sport at last !

With regard to the present Translation. The original Rubáiyát (as, missing an Arabic Guttural, these *Tetrastichs* are more musically called) are independent Stanzas, consisting each of four Lines of equal, though varied, Prosody ; sometimes *all* rhyming, but oftener (as here imitated) the third line a blank. Something as in the Greek Alcaic, where the penultimate line seems to lift and suspend the Wave that falls over in the last. As usual with such kind of Oriental Verse, the Rubáiyát follow one another according to Alphabetic Rhyme—a strange succession of Grave and Gay. Those here selected are strung into something of an Eclogue, with perhaps a less than equal proportion of the ‘Drink and make-merry,’ which (genuine or not) recurs

OMAR KHAYYÁM

over-frequently in the Original. Either way, the Result is sad enough : saddest perhaps when most ostentatiously merry : more apt to move Sorrow than Anger toward the old Tentmaker, who, after vainly endeavouring to unshackle his Steps from Destiny, and to catch some authentic Glimpse of To-morrow, fell back upon To-day (which has out-lastcd so many To-morrows !) as the only Ground he got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his Feet.

While the second Edition of this version of Omar was preparing, Monsieur Nicolas, French Consul at Resht, published a very careful and very good Edition of the Text, from a lithograph copy at Teheran, comprising 464 Rubáiyát, with translation and notes of his own.

Mons. Nicolas, whose Edition has reminded me of several things, and instructed me in others, does not consider Omar to be the material Epicurean that I have literally taken him for, but a Mystic, shadowing the Deity under the figure of Wine, Wine-bearer, etc., as Háfiz is supposed to do ; in short, a Súfí Poet like Háfiz and the rest.

I cannot see reason to alter my opinion, formed as it was more than a dozen years ago when Omar was first shown me by one to whom I am indebted for all I know of Oriental, and very much of other,

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

literature. He admired Omar's Genius so much, that he would gladly have adopted any such Interpretation of his meaning as Mons. Nicolas' if he could.¹ That he could not, appears by his Paper in the *Calcutta Review* already so largely quoted; in which he argues from the Poems themselves, as well as from what records remain of the Poet's Life.

And if more were needed to disprove Mons. Nicolas' Theory, there is the Biographical Notice which he himself has drawn up in direct contradiction to the Interpretation of the Poems given in his Notes. (See pp. 13-14 of his Preface.) Indeed I hardly knew poor Omar was so far gone till his Apologist informed me. For here we see that, whatever were the Wine that Háfiz drank and sang, the veritable Juice of the Grape it was which Omar used, not only when carousing with his friends, but (says Mons. Nicolas) in order to excite himself to that pitch of Devotion which others reached by cries and 'hurlemens.' And yet, whenever Wine, Wine-bearer, etc., occur in the Text—which is often enough—Mons. Nicolas carefully annotates 'Dieu,' 'La Divinité,' etc.: so carefully indeed that one is tempted to think that he was indoctrinated by the Súfi with whom he read the Poems (Note to Rub. ii. p. 8). A Persian

¹ Perhaps would have edited the Poems himself some years ago. He may now as little approve of my Version on one side, as of Mons. Nicolas' Theory on the other.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

would naturally wish to vindicate a distinguished Countryman ; and a Súfí to enrol him in his own sect, which already comprises all the chief Poets of Persia.

What historical authority has Mons. Nicolas to show that Omar gave himself up ‘avec passion à l’étude de la philosophie des Soufis’ ? (Preface, p. xiii.) The Doctrines of Pantheism, Materialism, Necessity, etc., were not peculiar to the Súfis ; nor to Lucretius before them ; nor to Epicurus before him ; probably the very original Irreligion of Thinking men from the first ; and very likely to be the spontaneous growth of a Philosopher living in an Age of social and political barbarism, under shadow of one of the Two and Seventy Religions supposed to divide the world. Von Hammer (according to Sprenger’s Oriental Catalogue) speaks of Omar as ‘a Free-Thinker, and a great opponent of *Sufism* ;’ perhaps because, while holding much of their Doctrine, he would not pretend to any inconsistent severity of morals. Sir W. Ouseley has written a note to something of the same effect on the fly-leaf of the Bodleian MS. And in two Rubáiyát of Mons. Nicolas’ own Edition Súf and Súfí are both disparagingly named.

No doubt many of these Quatrains seem unaccountable unless mystically interpreted : but many more as unaccountable unless literally. Were the Wine spiritual, for instance, how wash the Body with it when dead ? Why make cups

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

of the dead clay to be filled with—‘La Divinité’—by some succeeding Mystic? Mons. Nicolas himself is puzzled by some ‘bizarres’ and ‘trop Orientales’ allusions and images—‘d’une sensualité quelquefois révoltante’ indeed—which ‘les convenances’ do not permit him to translate; but still which the reader cannot but refer to ‘La Divinité.’¹ No doubt also many of the Quatrains in the Teheran, as in the Calcutta, Copies, are spurious; such *Rubdiyat* being the common form of Epigram in Persia. But this, at best, tells as much one way as another; nay, the Súfi, who may be considered the Scholar and Man of Letters in Persia, would be far more likely than the careless Epicure to interpolate what favours his own view of the Poet. I observe that very few of the more mystical Quatrains are in the Bodleian MS. which must be one of the oldest, as dated at Shiraz, A.H. 865, A.D. 1460. And this, I think, especially distinguishes Omar (I cannot help calling him by his—no, not Christian—familiar name) from all other Persian Poets:

¹ A Note to Quatrain 234 admits that, however clear the mystical meaning of such Images must be to Europeans, they are not quoted without ‘rougissant’ even by laymen in Persia—‘Quant aux termes de tendresse qui commencent ce quatrain, comme tant d’autres dans ce recueil, nos lecteurs, habitués maintenant à l’étrangeté des expressions si souvent employés par Khéyam pour rendre ses pensées sur l’amour divin, et à la singularité des images trop orientales, d’une sensualité quelquefois révoltante, n’auront pas de peine à se persuader qu’il s’agit de la Divinité, bien que cette conviction soit vivement discutée par les moullahs musulmans, et même par beaucoup de laïques, qui rougissent véritablement d’une pareille licence de leur compatriote à l’égard des choses spirituelles.’

OMAR KHAYYÁM

That, whereas with them the Poet is lost in his Song, the Man in Allegory and Abstraction ; we seem to have the Man—the *Bonhomme*—Omar himself, with all his Humours and Passions, as frankly before us as if we were really at Table with him, after the Wine had gone round.

I must say that I, for one, never wholly believed in the Mysticism of Háfiz. It does not appear there was any danger in holding and singing Súfi Pantheism, so long as the Poet made his Salaam to Mohammed at the beginning and end of his Song. Under such conditions Jelál-uddín Jámi, Attár, and others sang ; using Wine and Beauty indeed as Images to illustrate, not as a Mask to hide, the Divinity they were celebrating. Perhaps some Allegory less liable to mistake or abuse had been better among so inflammable a People : much more so when, as some think with Háfiz and Omar, the abstract is not only likened to, but identified with, the sensual Image ; hazardous, if not to the Devotee himself, yet to his weaker Brethren ; and worse for the Profane in proportion as the Devotion of the Initiated grew warmer. And all for what ? To be tantalized with Images of sensual enjoyment which must be renounced if one would approximate a God who, according to the Doctrine, *is* Sensual Matter as well as Spirit, and into whose Universe one expects unconsciously to merge after Death, without hope of any post-humous Beatitude in another world to compensate

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

for all one's self-denial in this. Lucretius' blind Divinity certainly merited, and probably got, as much self-sacrifice as this of the Súfí; and the burden of Omar's Song—if not 'Let us eat'—is assuredly—'Let us drink, for Tomorrow we die!' And if Háfíz meant quite otherwise by a similar language, he surely miscalculated when he devoted his Life and Genius to so equivocal a Psalmody as, from his Day to this, has been said and sung by any rather than spiritual Worshippers.

However, as there is some traditional presumption, and certainly the opinion of some learned men, in favour of Omar's being a Súfí—and even something of a Saint—those who please may so interpret his Wine and Cup-bearer. On the other hand, as there is far more historical certainty of his being a Philosopher, of scientific Insight and Ability far beyond that of the Age and Country he lived in; of such moderate worldly Ambition as becomes a Philosopher, and such moderate wants as rarely satisfy a Debauchee; other readers may be content to believe with me that, while the Wine Omar celebrates is simply the Juice of the Grape, he bragg'd more than he drank of it, in very defiance perhaps of that Spiritual Wine which left its Votaries sunk in Hypocrisy or Disgust.

RUBÁIYÁT

OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR

I.

WAKE ! For the Sun who scatter'd into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
 Drives Night along with them from Heav'n,
 and strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

II.

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,
 ' When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy Worshipper outside ? '

III.

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted—' Open then the door !
 You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more.'

RUBÁIYÁT OF

IV.

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
 Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the
 Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

V.

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,
And Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one
 knows ;
 But still a Ruby gushes from the Vine,
And many a Garden by the Water blows.

VI.

And David's lips are lockt ; but in divine
High-piping Péhlevi, with 'Wine ! Wine ! Wine !
 Red Wine !'—the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That sallow cheek of her's to 'incarnadine.

VII.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling :
 The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

VIII.

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
 The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

IX.

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say ;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday ?
And this first Summer month that brings the
Rose
Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobád away.

X.

Well, let it take them ! What have we to do
With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú ?
Let Zál and Rustum thunder as they will,
Or Hátim call to Supper—heed not you.

XI.

With me along the strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultán is forgot—
And Peace to Máhmúd on his golden Throne !

XII.

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow !

XIII.

Some for the Glories of This World ; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come ;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum !

RUBAIYÁT OF

XIV.

Look to the blowing Rose about us—Lo,
‘ Laughing,’ she says, ‘ into the world I blow,
At once the silken tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.’

XV.

And those who husbanded the Golden grain,
And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn’d
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

XVI.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers ; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert’s dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two—was gone.

XVII.

Think, in this batter’d Caravanserai
Whose portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his destin’d Hour, and went his way.

XVIII.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank
deep ;
And Bahráam, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o’er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XIX.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled ;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

XX.

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly ! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen !

XXI.

Ah, my Belovèd, fill the Cup that clears
To-DAY of past Regret and future Fears :
To-morrow !—Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

XXII.

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time has prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

XXIII.

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend—ourselves to make a Couch—for whom !

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XXIV.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend ;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End !

XXV.

Alike for those who for TO-DAY prepare,
And those that after some TO-MORROW stare,
A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries,
‘Fools ! your reward is neither Here nor There.’

XXVI.

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss’d
Of the Two Worlds so learnedly are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth ; their Words to
Scorn
Are scatter’d, and their Mouths are stopt with
Dust.

XXVII.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about : but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

XXVIII.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with my own hand wrought to make it grow ;
And this was all the Harvest that I reap’d—
‘I came like Water, and like Wind I go.’

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XXIX.

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing,
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing ;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

XXX.

What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence* ?
And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence !
Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine
Must drown the memory of that insolence !

XXXI.

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many a Knot unravel'd by the Road ;
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

XXXII.

There was the Door to which I found no Key ;
There was the Veil through which I could not
see :
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There was—and then no more of THEE and ME.

XXXIII.

Earth could not answer ; nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn ;
Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs reveal'd
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XXXIV.

Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
 A Lamp amid the Darkness ; and I heard,
As from Without—‘THE ME WITHIN THEE
 BLIND !’

XXXV.

Then to the Lip of this poor earthen Urn
I lean’d, the Secret of my Life to learn :
 And Lip to Lip it murmur’d—‘While you live,
Drink !—for, once dead, you never shall return.

XXXVI.

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answer’d, once did live,
 And drink ; and Ah ! the passive Lip I kiss’d
How many Kisses might it take—and give !

XXXVII.

For I remember stopping by the way
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay,
 And with its all-obliterated Tongue
It murmur’d—‘Gently, Brother, gently, pray ?’

XXXVIII.

Listen—a moment listen !—Of the same
Poor Earth from which that Human Whisper
 came
 The luckless Mould in which Mankind was cast
They did compose, and call’d him by the name.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XXXIX.

And not a drop that from our Cups we throw
For Earth to drink of, but may steal below
 To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye
There hidden—far beneath, and long ago.

XL.

As then the Tulip for her morning sup
Of Heav'nly Vintage from the soil looks up,
 Do you devoutly do the like, till Heav'n
To Earth invert you like an empty Cup.

XLI.

Perplexed no more with Human or Divine,
To-morrow's tangle to the winds resign,
 And lose your fingers in the tresses of
The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.

XLII.

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in what All begins and ends in—Yes ;
 Think then you are TO-DAY what YESTERDAY
You were—TO-MORROW you shall not be less.

XLIII.

So when the Angel of the darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-brink,
 And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff—you shall not shrink.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XLIV.

Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
Wer't not a shame—wer't not a Shame for him
In this clay carcase crippled to abide ?

XLV.

'Tis but a Tent where takes his one-day's rest
A Sultan to the realm of Death addrest ;
The Sultan rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another Guest.

XLVI.

And fear not lest Existence closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no more ;
The Eternal Sáki from that Bowl has pour'd
Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

XLVII.

When You and I behind the Veil are past,
Oh but the long long while the World shall last,
Which of our Coming and Departure heeds
As the SEV'N SEAS should heed a pebble-cast.

XLVIII.

A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste
Of BEING from the Well amid the Waste—
And Lo !—the phantom Caravan has reach'd
The NOTHING it set out from—Oh, make haste !

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XLIX.

Would you that spangle of Existence spend
About THE SECRET—quick about it, Friend !

A Hair perhaps divides the False and True—
And upon what, prithee, does Life depend ?

L.

A Hair perhaps divides the False and True ;
Yes ; and a single Alif were the clue—

Could you but find it—to the Treasure-house,
And peradventure to THE MASTER too ;

LI.

Whose secret Presence, through Creation's veins
Running Quicksilver-like eludes your pains ;

Taking all shapes from Máh to Máhi ; and
They change and perish all—but He remains ;

LII.

A moment guess'd—then back behind the Fold
Immerst of Darkness round the Drama roll'd

Which, for the Pastime of Eternity,
He does himself contrive, enact, behold.

LIII.

But if in vain, down on the stubborn floor
Of Earth, and up to Heav'n's unopening Door,

You gaze TO-DAY, while You are You—how
then

TO-MORROW, You when shall be You no more ?

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LIV.

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute ;

Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

LV.

You know, my Friends, with what a brave Carouse
I made a Second Marriage in my house ;

Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

LVI.

For ' Is ' and ' Is-NOT ' though with Rule and Line,
And ' UP-AND-DOWN ' by Logic I define

Of all that one should care to fathom, I
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

LVII.

Ah, but my Computations, People say,
Reduced the Year to better reckoning ?—Nay

'Twas only striking from the Calendar
Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday.

LVIII.

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape

Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder ; and
He bid me taste of it ; and 'twas—the Grape !

OMAR KHAYYÁM

LIX.

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute :
The sovereign Alchemist that in a trice
Life's leaden metal into Gold transmute :

LX.

The mighty Mahmúd, Allah-breathing Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters before him with his whirlwind Sword.

LXI.

Why, be this Juice the growth of God, who dare
Blaspheme the twisted tendril as a Snare ?
A Blessing, we should use it, should we not ?
And if a Curse—why, then, Who set it there ?

LXII.

I must abjure the Balm of Life, I must,
Scared by some After-reckoning ta'en on trust,
Or lured with Hope of some Diviner Drink,
To fill the Cup—when crumbled into Dust !

LXIII.

Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise !
One thing at least is certain—*This* Life flies ;
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies ;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LXIV.

Strange, is it not ? that of the myriads who
Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

LXV.

The Revelations of Devout and Learn'd
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burn'd,
Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep
They told their fellows, and to Sleep return'd.

LXVI.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell :
And by and by my Soul return'd to me,
And answer'd ' I Myself am Heav'n and Hell : '

LXVII.

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow of a Soul on fire,
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,
So late emerg'd from, shall so soon expire.

LXVIII.

We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with this Sun-illumin'd Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show ;

OMAR KHAYYÁM

LXIX.

Impotent Pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days ;
 Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

LXX.

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes ;
 And He that toss'd you down into the Field,
He knows about it all—*HE* knows—*HE* knows !

LXXI.

The Moving Finger writes ; and, having writ,
Moves on : nor all your Piety and Wit
 Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

LXXII.

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,
 Lift not your hands to *It* for help—for *It*
As impotently rolls as you or I.

LXXIII.

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man
 knead,
And there of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed :
 And the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LXXIV.

YESTERDAY *This* Day's Madness did prepare ;
To-MORROW's Silence, Triumph, or Despair :
 Drink ! for you know not whence you came,
 nor why :
Drink ! for you know not why you go, nor where.

LXXV.

I tell you this—When, started from the Goal,
Over the flaming shoulders of the Foal
 Of Heav'n Parwín and Mushtari they flung,
In my predestin'd Plot of Dust and Soul

LXXVI.

The Vine had struck a fibre : which about
If clings my Being—let the Dervish flout ;
 Of my Base metal may be filed a Key,
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

LXXVII.

And this I know : whether the one True Light
Kindle to Love, or Wrath-consume me quite,
 One Flash of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

LXXVIII.

What ! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
A conscious Something to resent the yoke
 Of unpermitted Pleasure, under pain
Of Everlasting Penalties, if broke !

OMAR KHAYYÁM

LXXIX.

What ! from his helpless Creature be repaid
Pure Gold for what he lent us dross—allay'd—
Sue for a Debt we never did contract,
And cannot answer—Oh the sorry trade !

LXXX.

Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestin'd Evil round
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin !

LXXXI.

Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake :
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd—Man's Forgiveness give—and take !

LXXXII.

As under cover of departing Day
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away,
Once more within the Potter's house alone
I stood, surrounded by the Shapes of Clay.

LXXXIII.

Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small,
That stood along the floor and by the wall ;
And some loquacious Vessels were ; and some
Listen'd perhaps, but never talk'd at all.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LXXXIV.

Said one among them—‘ Surely not in vain
My substance of the common Earth was ta’en
And to this Figure moulded, to be broke,
Or trampled back to Shapeless Earth again.’

LXXXV.

Then said a Second—‘ Ne’er a peevish Boy
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in
joy ;
And He that with his hand the Vessel made
Will surely not in after Wrath destroy.’

LXXXVI.

After a momentary silence spake
Some Vessel of a more ungainly Make ;
‘ They sneer at me for leaning all awry :
What ! did the Hand then of the Potter shake ?’

LXXXVII.

Whereat some one of the loquacious Lot—
I think a Súfi pipkin—waxing hot—
‘ All this of Pot and Potter—Tell me then,
Who makes—Who sells—Who buys—Who *is*
the Pot ?’

LXXXVIII.

‘ Why,’ said another, ‘ Some there are who tell
Of one who threatens he will toss to Hell
The luckless Pots he marr’d in making—Pish !
He’s a Good Fellow, and ’twill all be well.’

OMAR KHAYYÁM

LXXXIX.

‘ Well, ’ murmur’d one, ‘ Let whoso make or buy,
My Clay with long Oblivion is gone dry :
But fill me with the old familiar Juice,
Methinks I might recover by and by. ’

XC.

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,
The little Moon look’d in that all were seeking :
And then they jogg’d each other, ‘ Brother !
Brother !
Now for the Porter’s shoulder-knot a-creaking ! ’

XCI.

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash the Body whence the Life has died,
And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,
By some not unfrequented Garden-side.

XCII.

That ev’n my buried Ashes such a snare
Of Vintage shall fling up into the Air
As not a True-believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

XCIII.

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my credit in Men’s eye much wrong :
Have drown’d my Glory in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XCIV.

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore—but was I sober when I swore ?
And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-
hand
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

XCV.

And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel,
And robb'd me of my Robe of Honour—Well,
I wonder often what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the stuff they sell.

XCVI.

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose !
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should
close !
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows !

XCVII.

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, reveal'd,
To which the fainting Traveller might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field !

XCVIII.

Would but some wingèd Angel ere too late
Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
And make the stern Recorder otherwise
Enregister, or quite obliterate !

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XCIX.

Ah Love ! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire !

.

C.

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane ;
How oft hereafter rising look for us
Through this same Garden—and for *one* in vain !

CI.

And when like her, oh Sáki, you shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in your blissful errand reach the spot
Where I made One—turn down an empty Glass !

TAMÁM

NOTES

(Stanza 11.) The '*False Dawn*;' *Subhi Kázib*, a transient Light on the Horizon about an hour before the *Subhi sádik*, or True Dawn; a well-known Phenomenon in the East.

(iv.) New Year. Beginning with the Vernal Equinox, it must be remembered; and (howsoever the old Solar Year is practically superseded by the clumsy *Lunar* Year that dates from the Moham-medan Hijra) still commemorated by a Festival that is said to have been appointed by the very Jamshyd whom Omar so often talks of, and whose yearly Calendar he helped to rectify.

'The sudden approach and rapid advance of the Spring,' says Mr. Binning, 'are very striking. Before the Snow is well off the Ground, the Trees burst into Blossom, and the Flowers start from the Soil. At *Naw Rooz* (*their* New Year's Day) the Snow was lying in patches on the Hills and in the shaded Vallies, while the Fruit-trees in the Garden were budding beautifully, and green Plants and Flowers springing upon the Plains on every side—

'And on old Hyems' Chin and icy Crown
An odorous Chaplet of sweet Summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set—'

Among the Plants newly appear'd I recognized some Acquaintances I had not seen for many a Year; among these, two varieties of the Thistle; a coarse species of the Daisy, like the Horse-gowan; red and white Clover; the Dock; the blue Corn-flower; and that vulgar Herb the Dandelion rearing its yellow crest on the Banks of the Watercourses.' The Nightingale was not yet heard, for the Rose was not yet blown: but an almost identical Blackbird and Woodpecker helped to make up something of a North-country Spring.

(iv.) Exodus iv. 6; where Moses draws forth his Hand—not,

NOTES

according to the Persians, '*leprous as Snow*,'—but *white*, as our May-blossom in Spring perhaps. According to them also the Healing Power of Jesus resided in his Breath.

(v.) Iram, planted by King Shaddád, and now sunk somewhere in the Sands of Arabia. Jamshyd's Seven-ring'd Cup was typical of the 7 Heavens, 7 Planets, 7 Seas, etc., and was a *Divining Cup*.

(vi.) *Péhlevi*, the old Heroic *Sanskrit* of Persia. Háfiz also speaks of the Nightingale's *Péhlevi*, which did not change with the People's.

(vi.) I am not sure if this refers to the Red Rose looking sickly, or the Yellow Rose that ought to be Red; Red, White, and Yellow Roses all common in Persia. I think Southey, in his *Common-Place Book*, quotes from some Spanish author about a Rose being White till 10 o'clock; '*Rosa Perfecta*' at 2; and '*perfecta incarnada*' at 5.

(x.) Rustum, the '*Hercules*' of Persia, and Zál his Father, whose exploits are among the most celebrated in the *Sháh-náma*. Hátim Tai, a well-known Type of Oriental Generosity.

(xiii.) A Drum—beaten outside a Palace.

(xiv.) That is, the Rose's Golden Centre.

(xviii.) Persepolis: call'd also *Takht'i Jamshyd*—THE THRONE OF JAMSHYD, '*King Splendid*,' of the mythical *Peeshdádian* Dynasty, and supposed (according to the *Sháh-náma*) to have been founded and built by him. Others refer it to the Work of the Genie King, Ján Ibn Ján—who also built the Pyramids—before the time of Adam.

BAHRÁM GÚR—*Bahram of the Wild Ass*—a Sassanian Sovereign—had also his Seven Castles (like the King of Bohemia!) each of a different Colour: each with a Royal Mistress within; each of whom tells him a Story, as told in one of the most famous Poems of Persia, written by Amír Khusraw: all these Sevens also figuring (according to Eastern Mysticism) the Seven Heavens; and perhaps the Book itself that Eighth, into which the mystical Seven transcend, and within which they revolve. The Ruins of Three of these Towers are yet shown by the Peasantry; as also the Swamp in which Bahrám sunk, like the Master of Ravenswood, while pursuing his *Gúr*.

The Palace that to Heav'n his pillars threw,
And Kings the forehead on his threshold drew—

I saw the solitary Ringdove there,
And '*Coo, coo, coo*,' she cried; and '*Coo, coo, coo*.'

This Quatrain Mr. Binning found, among several of Háfiz and others, inscribed by some stray hand among the ruins of Persepolis.

NOTES

The Ringdove's ancient *Péhlevi* *Coo, Coo, Coo*, signifies also in Persian 'Where? Where? Where?' In Attár's 'Bird-parliament' she is reproved by the Leader of the Birds for sitting still, and for ever harping on that one note of lamentation for her lost Yúsuf.

Apropos of Omar's Red Roses in Stanza xix, I am reminded of an old English Superstition, that our Anemone Pulsatilla, or purple 'Pasque Flower' (which grows plentifully about the Fleam Dyke, near Cambridge), grows only where Danish Blood has been spilt.

(xxi.) A thousand years to each Planet.

(xxxI.) Saturn, Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

(xxxII.) ME-AND-THEE: some dividual Existence or Personality distinct from the Whole.

(xxxvii.) One of the Persian Poets—Attár, I think—has a pretty story about this. A thirsty Traveller dips his hand into a Spring of Water to drink from. By and by comes another who draws up and drinks from an earthen Bowl, and then departs, leaving his Bowl behind him. The first Traveller takes it up for another draught; but is surprised to find that the same Water which had tasted sweet from his own hand tastes bitter from the earthen Bowl, But a Voice—from Heaven, I think—tells him the Clay from which the Bowl is made was once *Man*; and, into whatever shape renew'd, can never lose the bitter flavour of Mortality.

(xxxix.) The custom of throwing a little Wine on the ground before drinking still continues in Persia, and perhaps generally in the East. Mons. Nicolas considers it 'un signe de libéralité, et en même temps un avertissement que le buveur doit vider sa coupe jusqu'à la dernière goutte.' Is it not more likely an ancient Superstition; a Libation to propitiate Earth, or make her an Accomplice in the illicit Revel? Or, perhaps, to divert the Jealous Eye by some sacrifice of superfluity, as with the Ancients of the West? With Omar we see something more is signified; the precious Liquor is not lost, but sinks into the ground to refresh the dust of some poor Wine-worshipper foregone.

Thus Háfiz, copying Omar in so many ways: 'When thou drinkest Wine pour a draught on the ground. Wherefore fear the Sin which brings to another Gain?'

(xliii.) According to one beautiful Oriental Legend, Azráel accomplishes his mission by holding to the nostril an Apple from the Tree of Life.

This, and the two following Stanzas would have been withdrawn, as somewhat *de trop*, from the Text, but for advice which I least like to disregard.

(li.) From Máh to Máhi; from Fish to Moon.

NOTES

(LVI.) A Jest, of course, at his Studies. A curious mathematical Quatrain of Omar's has been pointed out to me ; the more curious because almost exactly parallel'd by some Verses of Doctor Donne's, that are quoted in Izaak Walton's Lives ! Here is Omar : ' You and I are the image of a pair of compasses ; though we have two heads (sc. our *feet*) we have one body ; when we have fixed the centre for our circle, we bring our heads (sc. feet) together at the end.' Dr. Donne :

If we be two, we two are so
As stiff twin-compasses are two ;
Thy Soul, the fixt foot, makes no show
To move, but does if the other do.

And though thine in the centre sit,
Yet when my other far does roam,
Thine leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as mine comes home.

Such thou must be to me, who must
Like the other foot obliquely run ;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And me to end where I begun.

(LIX.) The Seventy-two Religions supposed to divide the World, including Islamism, as some think : but others not.

(LX.) Alluding to Sultan Mahmúd's Conquest of India and its dark people.

(LXVIII.) *Fánúsi khiyál*, a Magic-lanthorn still used in India ; the cylindrical Interior being painted with various Figures, and so lightly poised and ventilated as to revolve round the lighted candle within.

(LXX.) A very mysterious Line in the Original :

O dánad O dánad O dánad O——

breaking off something like our Wood-pigeon's Note, which she is said to take up just where she left off.

(LXXV.) Parwín and Mushtari—The Pleiads and Jupiter.

(LXXXVII.) This Relation of Pot and Potter to Man and his Maker figures far and wide in the Literature of the World, from the time of the Hebrew Prophets to the present ; when it may finally take the name of 'Pottheism,' by which Mr. Carlyle ridiculed Sterling's 'Pantheism.' *My* Sheikh, whose knowledge flows in from all quarters, writes to me—

NOTES

‘Apropos of old Omar’s Pots, did I ever tell you the sentence I found in “Bishop Pearson on the Creed”?’ ‘Thus are we wholly at the disposal of His will, and our present and future condition framed and ordered by His free, but wise and just, decrees. “*Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?*” (Rom. ix. 21). And can that earth-artificer have a freer power over his *brother potsherd* (both being made of the same metal), than God hath over him, who, by the strange fecundity of His omnipotent power, first made the clay out of nothing, and then him out of that?’

And again—from a very different quarter—‘I had to refer the other day to Aristophanes, and came by chance on a curious Speaking-pot story in the *Vespæ*, which I had quite forgotten.

ΦΙΑΟΚΛΕΩΝ. ἄκουε, μὴ φεύγῃς ἐν Συβάρει γυνή ποτε 1. 1435
κατέαξ' ἐχίνον.

ΚΑΤΗΓΟΡΟΣ. ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι.
ΦΙ. οὐχίνος οὖν ἔχων τιν' ἐπεμαρτύρατο·
εἰθ' ἡ Συβαρίτις εἶπεν, εἰ ναὶ τὰν κόραν
τὴν μαρτυρίαν ταύτην ἔδασας ἐν τάχει
ἐπίδεσμον ἐπρίω, νοῦν ἂν εἶχες πλείονα.

‘The Pot calls a bystander to be a witness to his bad treatment. The woman says, “If, by Proserpine, instead of all this ‘testifying’ (comp. Cuddie and his mother in *Old Mortality*!) you would buy yourself a trivet, it would show more sense in you!” The Scholiast explains *echinus* as ἀγγος τι ἐκ κεράμων.’

(xc.) At the close of the Fasting Month, Ramazán (which makes the Musulman unhealthy and unamiable), the first Glimpse of the New Moon (who rules their division of the Year), is looked for with the utmost Anxiety, and hailed with Acclamation. Then it is that the Porter’s Knot may be heard—toward the *Cellar*. Omar has elsewhere a pretty Quatrain about this same Moon—

‘Be of Good Cheer—the sullen Month will die,
And a young Moon requite us by and by :
Look how the Old one, meagre, bent, and wan
With Age and Fast, is fainting from the Sky !’

RUBÁIYÁT
OF
OMAR KHAYYÁM

FOURTH EDITION

1879

OMAR KHAYYÁM

THE

ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

OMAR KHAYYÁM was born at Naishápúr in Khorassán in the latter half of our Eleventh, and died within the First Quarter of our Twelfth Century. The slender Story of his Life is curiously twined about that of two other very considerable Figures in their Time and Country : one of whom tells the Story of all Three. This was Nizám-ul-Mulk, Vizyr to Alp Arslan the Son, and Malik Shah the Grandson, of Toghrul Beg the Tartar, who had wrested Persia from the feeble Successor of Mahmúd the Great, and founded that Seljukian Dynasty which finally roused Europe into the Crusades. This Nizám-ul-Mulk, in his *Wasiyat*—or *Testament*—which he wrote and left as a Memorial for future Statesmen—relates the following, as quoted in the *Calcutta Review*, No. lix., from Mirkhond's *History of the Assassins*.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

“ One of the greatest of the wise men of Khorassán was the Imám Mowaffak of Naishápúr, a man highly honoured and revered—may God rejoice his soul ; his illustrious years exceeded eighty-five, and it was the universal belief that every boy who read the Koran or studied the traditions in his presence, would assuredly attain to honour and happiness. For this cause did my father send me from Tús to Naishápúr with Abd-us-samad, the doctor of law, that I might employ myself in study and learning under the guidance of that illustrious teacher. Towards me he ever turned an eye of favour and kindness, and as his pupil I felt for him extreme affection and devotion, so that I passed four years in his service. When I first came there, I found two other pupils of mine own age newly arrived, Hakim Omar Khayyám, and the ill-fated Ben Sabbáh. Both were endowed with sharpness of wit and the highest natural powers ; and we three formed a close friendship together. When the Imám rose from his lectures, they used to join me, and we repeated to each other the lessons we had heard. Now Omar was a native of Naishápúr, while Hasan Ben Sabbáh’s father was one Ali, a man of austere life and practice, but heretical in his creed and doctrine. One day Hasan said to me and to Khayyám, ‘ It is a universal belief that the pupils of the Imám Mowaffak will attain to fortune. Now, even if we *all* do not attain thereto, without doubt one

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

of us will ; what then shall be our mutual pledge and bond ?' We answered, ' Be it what you please.'—' Well,' he said, ' let us make a vow, that to whomsoever this fortune falls, he shall share it equally with the rest, and reserve no pre-eminence for himself.'—' Be it so,' we both replied, and on those terms we mutually pledged our words. Years rolled on, and I went from Khorassán to Transoxiana, and wandered to Ghazni and Cabul ; and when I returned, I was invested with office, and rose to be administrator of affairs during the Sultanate of Sultan Alp Arslán.'

' He goes on to state, that years passed by, and both his old school-friends found him out, and came and claimed a share in his good fortune, according to the school-day vow. The Vizier was generous and kept his word. Hasan demanded a place in the government, which the Sultan granted at the Vizier's request ; but, discontented with a gradual rise, he plunged into the maze of intrigue of an Oriental Court, and, failing in a base attempt to supplant his benefactor, he was disgraced and fell. After many mishaps and wanderings, Hasan became the head of the Persian sect of the *Ismâ'lians*,—a party of fanatics who had long murmured in obscurity, but rose to an evil eminence under the guidance of his strong and evil will. In A.D. 1090, he seized the castle of Alamút, in the province of Rúdbar, which lies in the mountainous tract south of the Caspian Sea ; and it was from this

OMAR KHAYYÁM

mountain home he obtained that evil celebrity among the Crusaders as the OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS, and spread terror through the Mohammedan world ; and it is yet disputed whether the word *Assassin*, which they have left in the language of modern Europe as their dark memorial, is derived from the *hashish*, or opiate of hemp-leaves (the Indian *bhang*), with which they maddened themselves to the sullen pitch of Oriental desperation, or from the name of the founder of the dynasty, whom we have seen in his quiet collegiate days at Naishápúr. One of the countless victims of the Assassin's dagger was Nizám-ul-Mulk himself, the old school-boy friend.¹

‘Omar Khayyám also came to the Vizier to claim his share ; but not to ask for title or office. “The greatest boon you can confer on me,” he said, “is to let me live in a corner under the shadow of your fortune, to spread wide the advantages of Science, and pray for your long life and prosperity.” The Vizier tells us, that, when he found Omar was really sincere in his refusal, he pressed him no further, but granted him a yearly pension of 1200 *mithkáls* of gold, from the treasury of Naishápúr.

¹ Some of Omar's Rubáiyát warn us of the danger of Greatness, the instability of Fortune, and while advocating Charity to all Men, recommending us to be too intimate with none. Attár makes Nizám-ul-Mulk use the very words of his friend Omar [Rub. xxviii.], ‘When Nizám-ul-Mulk was in the Agony (of Death) he said, “Oh God ! I am passing away in the hand of the Wind.”’

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

‘At Naishápúr thus lived and died Omar Khayyám, “busied,” adds the Vizier, “in winning knowledge of every kind, and especially in Astronomy, wherein he attained to a very high pre-eminence. Under the Sultanate of Malik Shah, he came to Merv, and obtained great praise for his proficiency in science, and the Sultan showered favours upon him.”

‘When Malik Shah determined to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight learned men employed to do it; the result was the *ġaláli* era (so called from *ġalál-ud-din*, one of the king’s names)—“a computation of time,” says Gibbon, “which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style.” He is also the author of some astronomical tables, entitled *Zíji-Maliksháhí*,’ and the French have lately republished and translated an Arabic Treatise of his on Algebra.

‘His Takhallus or poetical name (Khayyám) signifies a Tent-maker, and he is said to have at one time exercised that trade, perhaps before Nizám-ul-Mulk’s generosity raised him to independence. Many Persian poets similarly derive their names from their occupations; thus we have Attár, “a druggist,” Assár, “an oil presser,” etc.¹ Omar himself alludes to his name in the following whimsical lines :

¹ Though all these, like our Smiths, Archers, Millers, Fletchers, etc., may simply retain the Surname of an hereditary calling.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

“Khayyám, who stitched the tents of science,
Has fallen in grief's furnace and been suddenly burned ;
The shears of Fate have cut the tent ropes of his life,
And the broker of Hope has sold him for nothing !”

‘ We have only one more anecdote to give of his Life, and that relates to the close ; it is told in the anonymous preface which is sometimes prefixed to his poems ; it has been printed in the Persian in the Appendix to Hyde's *Veterum Persarum Religio*, p. 499 ; and D'Herbelot alludes to it in his *Bibliothèque*, under *Khiam* :¹—

“ It is written in the chronicles of the ancients that this King of the Wise, Omar Khayyám, died at Naishápúr in the year of the Hegira 517 (A.D. 1123) ; in science he was unrivalled,—the very paragon of his age. Khwájah Nizámi of Samarcand, who was one of his pupils, relates the following story : ‘ I often used to hold conversations with my teacher Omar Khayyám, in a garden ; and one day he said to me, “ My tomb shall be in a spot where the north wind may scatter roses over it.” I wondered at the words he spake, but I knew that his were no idle words.’²

¹ ‘Philosophe Musulman qui a vécu en Odeur de Sainteté dans sa Religion, vers la Fin du premier et le Commencement du second Siècle,’ no part of which, except the ‘Philosophe,’ can apply to our Khayyám.

² The Rashness of the Words, according to D'Herbelot, consisted in being so opposed to those in the Korán : ‘No Man knows where he shall die.’—This story of Omar reminds me of another so naturally—and when one remembers how wide of his humble mark

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

Years after, when I chanced to revisit Naishápúr, I went to his final resting-place, and lo ! it was just outside a garden, and trees laden with fruit stretched their boughs over the garden wall, and dropped their flowers upon his tomb, so as the stone was hidden under them.' ” ’

Thus far—without fear of Trespass—from the *Calcutta Review*. The writer of it, on reading in India this story of Omar’s Grave, was reminded, he says, of Cicero’s Account of finding Archimedes’ Tomb at Syracuse, buried in grass and weeds. I think Thorwaldsen desired to have roses grow over him ; a wish religiously fulfilled for him to the present day, I believe. However, to return to Omar.

Though the Sultan ‘shower’d Favours upon him,’ Omar’s Epicurean Audacity of Thought and Speech caused him to be regarded askance in his own Time and Country. He is said to have been especially hated and dreaded by the Súfis, whose Practice he ridiculed, and whose

the noble sailor aimed—so pathetically told by Captain Cook—not by Doctor Hawkesworth—in his Second Voyage (i. 374). When leaving Ulietea, ‘Oreo’s last request was for me to return. When he saw he could not obtain that promise, he asked the name of my *Marai* (burying-place). As strange a question as this was, I hesitated not a moment to tell him “Stepney” ; the parish in which I live when in London. I was made to repeat it several times over till they could pronounce it ; and then “Stepney Marai no Toote” was echoed through a hundred mouths at once. I afterwards found the same question had been put to Mr. Forster by a man on shore ; but he gave a different, and indeed more proper answer, by saying, “No man who used the sea could say where he should be buried.” ’

OMAR KHAYYÁM

Faith amounts to little more than his own, when stript of the Mysticism and formal recognition of Islamism under which Omar would not hide. Their Poets, including Háfiz, who are (with the exception of Firdausi) the most considerable in Persia, borrowed largely, indeed, of Omar's material, but turning it to a mystical Use more convenient to Themselves and the People they addressed ; a People quite as quick of Doubt as of Belief ; as keen of Bodily Sense as of Intellectual ; and delighting in a cloudy composition of both, in which they could float luxuriously between Heaven and Earth, and this World and the Next, on the wings of a poetical expression, that might serve indifferently for either. Omar was too honest of Heart as well as of Head for this. Having failed (however mistakenly) of finding any Providence but Destiny, and any World but This, he set about making the most of it ; preferring rather to soothe the Soul through the Senses into Acquiescence with Things as he saw them, than to perplex it with vain disquietude after what they *might* be. It has been seen, however, that his Worldly Ambition was not exorbitant ; and he very likely takes a humorous or perverse pleasure in exalting the gratification of Sense above that of the Intellect, in which he must have taken great delight, although it failed to answer the Questions in which he, in common with all men, was most vitally interested.

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

For whatever Reason, however, Omar, as before said, has never been popular in his own Country, and therefore has been but scantily transmitted abroad. The MSS. of his Poems, mutilated beyond the average Casualties of Oriental Transcription, are so rare in the East as scarce to have reacht Westward at all, in spite of all the acquisitions of Arms and Science. There is no copy at the India House, none at the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris. We know but of one in England: No. 140 of the Ouseley MSS. at the Bodleian, written at Shiráz, A.D. 1460. This contains but 158 Rubáiyát. One in the Asiatic Society's Library at Calcutta (of which we have a Copy) contains (and yet incomplete) 516, though swelled to that by all kinds of Repetition and Corruption. So Von Hammer speaks of *his* Copy as containing about 200, while Dr. Sprenger catalogues the Lucknow MS. at double that number.¹ The Scribes, too, of the Oxford and Calcutta MSS. seem to do their Work under a sort of Protest; each beginning with a Tetrastich (whether genuine or not), taken out of its alphabetical order; the Oxford with one of Apology; the Calcutta with one of Expostulation, supposed (says a Notice prefixed to the MS.) to have arisen from a Dream, in

¹ 'Since this Paper was written' (adds the Reviewer in a note), 'we have met with a Copy of a very rare Edition, printed at Calcutta in 1836. This contains 438 Tetrastichs, with an Appendix containing 54 others not found in some MSS.'

OMAR KHAYYÁM

which Omar's mother asked about his future fate. It may be rendered thus—

‘Oh Thou who burn'st in Heart for those who burn
In Hell, whose fires thyself shall feed in turn ;
How long be crying, “Mercy on them, God !”
Why, who art Thou to teach, and He to learn ?’

The Bodleian Quatrain pleads Pantheism by way of Justification.

‘If I myself upon a looser Creed
Have loosely strung the Jewel of Good deed,
Let this one thing for my Atonement plead :
That One for Two I never did mis-read.’

The Reviewer,¹ to whom I owe the Particulars of Omar's life, concludes his Review by comparing him with Lucretius, both as to natural Temper and Genius, and as acted upon by the Circumstances in which he lived. Both indeed were men of subtle, strong, and cultivated Intellect, fine Imagination, and Hearts passionate for Truth and Justice ; who justly revolted from their Country's false Religion, and false, or foolish, Devotion to it ; but who fell short of replacing what they subverted by such better *Hope* as others, with no better Revelation to guide them, had yet made a Law to themselves. Lucretius, indeed, with such material as Epicurus furnished, satisfied himself with the theory of a vast machine fortuitously constructed, and acting

¹ Professor Cowell.

THE ASTRONOMER-POET OF PERSIA

by a Law that implied no Legislator ; and so composing himself into a Stoical rather than Epicurean severity of Attitude, sat down to contemplate the mechanical Drama of the Universe which he was part Actor in ; himself and all about him (as in his own sublime description of the Roman Theatre) discoloured with the lurid reflex of the Curtain suspended between the Spectator and the Sun. Omar, more desperate, or more careless of any so complicated System as resulted in nothing but hopeless Necessity, flung his own Genius and Learning with a bitter or humorous jest into the general Ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal ; and, pretending sensual pleasure as the serious purpose of Life, only *diverted* himself with speculative problems of Deity, Destiny, Matter and Spirit, Good and Evil, and other such questions, easier to start than to run down, and the pursuit of which becomes a very weary sport at last !

With regard to the present Translation. The original Rubáiyát (as, missing an Arabic Guttural, these *Tetrastichs* are more musically called) are independent Stanzas, consisting each of four Lines of equal, though varied, Prosody ; sometimes *all* rhyming, but oftener (as here imitated) the third line a blank. Somewhat as in the Greek Alcaic, where the penultimate line seems to lift and suspend the Wave that falls over in the last. As usual with such kind of Oriental Verse, the

OMAR KHAYYÁM

Rubáiyát follow one another according to Alphabetic Rhyme—a strange succession of Grave and Gay. Those here selected are strung into something of an Eclogue, with perhaps a less than equal proportion of the ‘Drink and make-merry,’ which (genuine or not) recurs over-frequently in the Original. Either way ; the Result is sad enough : saddest perhaps when most ostentatiously merry : more apt to move Sorrow than Anger toward the old Tent-maker, who, after vainly endeavouring to unshackle his Steps from Destiny, and to catch some authentic Glimpse of To-morrow, fell back upon To-day (which has outlasted so many To-morrows !) as the only Ground he had got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his Feet.

RUBÁIYÁT

OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM OF NAISHÁPÚR

I.

WAKE ! For the Sun, who scatter'd into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n,
and strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

II.

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,
'When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy Worshipper outside ?'

III.

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted—'Open then the Door !
You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more.'

RUBAIYAT OF

IV.

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

V.

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,
And Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one
knows ;
But still a Ruby kindles in the Vine,
And many a Garden by the Water blows.

VI.

And David's lips are lockt ; but in divine
High-piping Pehleví, with 'Wine ! Wine ! Wine !
Red Wine !'—the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That sallow cheek of hers to' incarnadine.

VII.

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling :
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.

VIII.

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

IX.

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say ;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday ?
And this first Summer month that brings the
Rose
Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobád away.

X.

Well, let it take them ! What have we to do
With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú ?
Let Zál and Rustum bluster as they will,
Or Hátim call to Supper—heed not you.

XI.

With me along the strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultán is forgot—
And Peace to Mahmúd on his golden Throne !

XII.

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow !

XIII.

Some for the Glories of This World ; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come ;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum !

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XIV.

Look to the blowing Rose about us—‘ Lo,
Laughing,’ she says, ‘ into the world I blow,
At once the silken tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw.’

XV.

And those who husbanded the Golden grain,
And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn’d
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

XVI.

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes—or it prospers ; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert’s dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two—is gone.

XVII.

Think, in this batter’d Caravanseraï
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

XVIII.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank
deep :
And Bahráam, that great Hunter—the Wild Ass
Stamps o’er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XIX.

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled ;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

XX.

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean—
Ah, lean upon it lightly ! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen !

XXI.

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears
To-DAY of past Regrets and Future Fears :
To-morrow !—Why, *To-morrow* I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

XXII.

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

XXIII.

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend—ourselves to make a Couch—for whom ?

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XXIV.

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend ;
Dust into Dust, and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and—sans End !

XXV.

Alike for those who for To-DAY prepare,
And those that after some To-MORROW stare,
A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries,
‘Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There.’

XXVI.

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss’d
Of the Two Worlds so wisely—they are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth ; their Words to
Scorn
Are scatter’d, and their Mouths are stopt with
Dust.

XXVII.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about : but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

XXVIII.

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow
And this was all the Harvest that I reap’d—
‘I came like Water, and like Wind I go.’

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XXIX.

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing ;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

XXX.

What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence* ?
And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence !
Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine
Must drown the memory of that insolence !

XXXI.

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh
Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate ;
And many a Knot unravel'd by the Road ;
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

XXXII.

There was the Door to which I found no Key ;
There was the Veil through which I might not see :
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There was—and then no more of THEE and ME.

XXXIII.

Earth could not answer ; nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn ;
Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs reveal'd
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XXXIV.

Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
A lamp amid the Darkness ; and I heard,
As from Without — ‘THE ME WITHIN THEE
BLIND !’

XXXV.

Then to the lip of this poor earthen Urn
I lean’d, the Secret of my Life to learn :
And Lip to Lip it murmur’d—‘ While you live,
Drink !—for, once dead, you never shall return.’

XXXVI.

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answer’d once did live,
And drink ; and Ah ! the passive Lip I kiss’d,
How many Kisses might it take—and give !

XXXVII.

For I remember stopping by the way
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay :
And with its all-obliterated Tongue
It murmur’d—‘ Gently, Brother, gently, pray !’

XXXVIII.

And has not such a Story from of Old
Down Man’s successive generations roll’d
Of such a clod of saturated Earth
Cast by the Maker into Human mould ?

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XXXIX.

And not a drop that from our Cups we throw
For Earth to drink of, but may steal below
 To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye
There hidden—far beneath, and long ago.

XL.

As then the Tulip for her morning sup
Of Heav'nly Vintage from the soil looks up,
 Do you devoutly do the like, till Heav'n
To Earth invert you—like an empty Cup.

XLI.

Perplexed no more with Human or Divine,
To-morrow's tangle to the winds resign,
 And lose your fingers in the tresses of
The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.

XLII.

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in what All begins and ends in—Yes ;
 Think then you are To-DAY what YESTERDAY
You were—To-MORROW you shall not be less.

XLIII.

So when that Angel of the darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-brink,
 And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff—you shall not
 shrink.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XLIV.

Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
 Were't not a Shame—were't not a Shame for
 him
In this clay carcase crippled to abide ?

XLV.

'Tis but a Tent where takes his one day's rest
A Sultán to the realm of Death address ;
 The Sultán rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another Guest.

XLVI.

And fear not lest Existence closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no more ;
 The Eternal Sáki from that Bowl has pour'd
Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

XLVII.

When You and I behind the Veil are past,
Oh, but the long, long while the World shall
 last,
 Which of our Coming and Departure heeds
As the Sea's self should heed a pebble-cast.

XLVIII.

A Moment's Halt—a momentary taste
Of BEING from the Well amid the Waste—
 And Lo !—the phantom Caravan has reach'd
The NOTHING it set out from—Oh, make haste !

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XLIX.

Would you that spangle of Existence spend
About THE SECRET—quick about it, Friend !

A Hair perhaps divides the False and True—
And upon what, prithee, may life depend ?

L.

A Hair perhaps divides the False and True ;
Yes ; and a single Alif were the clue—

Could you but find it—to the Treasure-house,
And peradventure to THE MASTER too ;

LI.

Whose secret Presence, through Creation's veins
Running Quicksilver-like eludes your pains ;

Taking all shapes from Máh to Máhi ; and
They change and perish all—but He remains ;

LII.

A moment guess'd—then back behind the Fold
Immerst of Darkness round the Drama roll'd

Which, for the Pastime of Eternity,
He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold.

LIII.

But if in vain, down on the stubborn floor
Of Earth, and up to Heav'n's unopening Door,

You gaze To-DAY, while You are You—how
then
To-MORROW, You when shall be You no more ?

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LIV.

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute ;
Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

LV.

You know, my Friends, with what a brave Carouse
I made a Second Marriage in my house ;
Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

LVI.

For ' IS ' and ' IS-NOT ' though with Rule and Line
And ' UP-AND-DOWN ' by Logic I define,
Of all that one should care to fathom, I
Was never deep in anything but—Wine.

LVII.

Ah, but my Computations, People say,
Reduced the Year to better reckoning ?—Nay,
'Twas only striking from the Calendar
Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday.

LVIII.

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder ; and
He bid me taste of it ; and 'twas—the Grape !

OMAR KHAYYÁM

LIX.

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute :
The sovereign Alchemist that in a trice
Life's leaden metal into Gold transmute :

LX.

The mighty Mahmúd, Allah-breathing Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters before him with his whirlwind Sword.

LXI.

Why, be this Juice the growth of God, who dare
Blaspheme the twisted tendril as a Snare ?
A Blessing, we should use it, should we not ?
And if a Curse—why, then, Who set it there ?

LXII.

I must abjure the Balm of Life, I must,
Scared by some After-reckoning ta'en on trust,
Or lured with Hope of some Diviner Drink,
To fill the Cup—when crumbled into Dust !

LXIII.

Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise !
One thing at least is certain—*This* Life flies ;
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies ;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LXIV.

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through,
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

LXV.

The Revelations of Devout and Learn'd
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burn'd,
Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep
They told their comrades, and to Sleep return'd.

LXVI.

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell :
And by and by my Soul return'd to me,
And answer'd ' I Myself am Heav'n and Hell : '

LXVII.

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire,
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

LXVIII.

We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with the Sun-illumined Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show ;

OMAR KHAYYÁM

LXIX.

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days ;
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

LXX.

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Here or There as strikes the Player goes ;
And He that toss'd you down into the Field,
He knows about it all—*HE* knows—*HE* knows !

LXXI.

The Moving Finger writes ; and, having writ,
Moves on : nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

LXXII.

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,
Lift not your hands to *It* for help—for *It*
As impotently moves as you or I.

LXXIII.

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man
knead,
And there of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed :
And the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LXXIV.

YESTERDAY *This* Day's Madness did prepare ;
TO-MORROW's Silence, Triumph, or Despair :

Drink ! for you know not whence you came,
nor why :

Drink ! for you know not why you go, nor
where.

LXXV.

I tell you this—When, started from the Goal,
Over the flaming shoulders of the Foal

Of Heav'n Parwín and Mushtarí they flung,
In my predestined Plot of Dust and Soul

LXXVI.

The Vine had struck a fibre : which about
If clings my being—let the Dervish flout ;

Of my Base metal may be filed a Key,
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

LXXVII.

And this I know : whether the one True Light
Kindle to Love, or Wrath-consume me quite,

One Flash of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

LXXVIII.

What ! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
A conscious Something to resent the yoke

Of unpermitted Pleasure, under pain
Of Everlasting Penalties, if broke !

OMAR KHAYYÁM

LXXIX.

What ! from his helpless Creature be repaid
Pure Gold for what he lent him dross-allay'd—
Sue for a Debt he never did contract,
And cannot answer—Oh the sorry trade !

LXXX.

Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin !

LXXXI.

Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake :
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take !

LXXXII.

As under cover of departing Day
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away,
Once more within the Potter's house alone
I stood, surrounded by the Shapes of Clay.

LXXXIII.

Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small,
That stood along the floor and by the wall ;
And some loquacious Vessels were ; and some
Listen'd perhaps, but never talk'd at all.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

LXXXIV.

Said one among them—‘ Surely not in vain
My substance of the common Earth was ta’en
And to this Figure moulded, to be broke,
Or trampled back to shapeless Earth again.’

LXXXV.

Then said a Second—‘ Ne’er a peevish Boy
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in joy;
And He that with his hand the Vessel made
Will surely not in after Wrath destroy.’

LXXXVI.

After a momentary silence spake
Some Vessel of a more ungainly Make ;
‘ They sneer at me for leaning all awry :
What ! did the Hand then of the Potter
shake ? ’

LXXXVII.

Whereat some one of the loquacious Lot—
I think a Súfi pipkin—waxing hot—
‘ All this of Pot and Potter—Tell me then,
Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot ? ’

LXXXVIII.

‘ Why,’ said another, ‘ Some there are who tell
Of one who threatens he will toss to Hell
The luckless Pots he marr’d in making—Pish !
He’s a Good Fellow, and ’t will all be well.’

OMAR KHAYYÁM

LXXXIX.

‘ Well,’ murmur’d one, ‘ Let whoso make or buy,
My Clay with long Oblivion is gone dry :
But fill me with the old familiar Juice,
Methinks I might recover by and by.’

XC.

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,
The little Moon look’d in that all were seeking :
And then they jogg’d each other, ‘ Brother !
Brother !
Now for the Porter’s shoulder-knot a-creaking !’

XCI.

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash the Body whence the Life has died,
And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,
By some not unfrequented Garden-side.

XCII.

That ev’n my buried Ashes such a snare
Of Vintage shall fling up into the Air
As not a True-believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

XCIII.

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my credit in this World much wrong :
Have drown’d my Glory in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

RUBÁIYÁT OF

XCIV.

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore—but was I sober when I swore ?
And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-
hand
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

XCV.

And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel,
And robb'd me of my Robe of Honour—Well,
I wonder often what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the stuff they sell.

XCVI.

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose !
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should
close !
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows !

XCVII.

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield
One glimpse—if dimly, yet indeed, reveal'd,
To which the fainting Traveller might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field !

XCVIII.

Would but some winged Angel ere too late
Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
And make the stern Recorder otherwise
Enregister, or quite obliterate !

OMAR KHAYYÁM

XCIX.

Ah Love ! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire !

.

C.

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane ;
How oft hereafter rising look for us
Through this same Garden—and for *one* in vain !

CI.

And when like her, oh Sáki, you shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in your joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made One—turn down an empty Glass !

TAMÁM

NOTES

(Stanza 11.) The 'False Dawn'; *Subhi Kázib*, a transient Light on the Horizon about an hour before the *Subhi sádik*, or True Dawn; a well-known Phenomenon in the East.

(iv.) New Year. Beginning with the Vernal Equinox, it must be remembered; and (howsoever the old Solar Year is practically superseded by the clumsy Lunar Year that dates from the Mohammedan Hijra) still commemorated by a Festival that is said to have been appointed by the very Jamshyd whom Omar so often talks of, and whose yearly Calendar he helped to rectify.

'The sudden approach and rapid advance of the Spring,' says Mr. Binning,¹ 'are very striking. Before the Snow is well off the Ground, the Trees burst into Blossom, and the Flowers start forth from the Soil. At *Now Rooz* [*their* New Year's Day] the Snow was lying in patches on the Hills and in the shaded Vallies, while the Fruit-trees in the Gardens were budding beautifully, and green Plants and Flowers springing up on the Plains on every side—

“And on old Hyems' Chin and icy Crown
An odorous Chaplet of sweet Summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set.”—

Among the Plants newly appeared I recognised some old Acquaintances I had not seen for many a Year: among these, two varieties of the Thistle—a coarse species of Daisy like the “Horse-gowan”—red and white Clover—the Dock—the blue Corn-flower—and that vulgar Herb the Dandelion rearing its yellow crest on the Banks of the Water-courses.' The Nightingale was not yet heard, for the Rose was not yet blown: but an almost identical Black-bird and Woodpecker helped to make up something of a North-country Spring.

¹ *Two Years' Travel in Persia, etc.*, i. 165.

NOTES

‘The White Hand of Moses.’ Exodus iv. 6; where Moses draws forth his Hand—not, according to the Persians, ‘*leprous as Snow*,’—but *white*, as our May-blossom in Spring perhaps. According to them also the Healing Power of Jesus resided in His Breath.

(v.) Iram, planted by King Shaddád, and now sunk somewhere in the Sands of Arabia. Jamshyd’s Seven-ring’d Cup was typical of the 7 Heavens, 7 Planets, 7 Seas, etc., and was a *Divining Cup*.

(vi.) *Pehleví*, the old Heroic *Sanskrit* of Persia. Háfiz also speaks of the Nightingale’s *Pehlevi*, which did not change with the People’s.

I am not sure if the fourth line refers to the Red Rose looking sickly, or to the Yellow Rose that ought to be Red; Red, White, and Yellow Roses all common in Persia. I think that Southey, in his Common-Place Book, quotes from some Spanish author about the Rose being White till 10 o’clock; ‘*Rosa Perfecta*’ at 2; and ‘*perfecta incarnada*’ at 5.

(x.) Rustum, the ‘Hercules’ of Persia, and Zál his Father, whose exploits are among the most celebrated in the Sháh-náma. Hátim Tai, a well-known type of Oriental Generosity.

(xiii.) A Drum—beaten outside a Palace.

(xiv.) That is, the Rose’s Golden Centre.

(xviii.) Persepolis: call’d also *Takht-i-Jamshyd*—THE THRONE OF JAMSHYD, ‘*King Splendid*,’ of the mythical *Peshdádian* Dynasty, and supposed (according to the Sháh-náma) to have been founded and built by him. Others refer it to the Work of the Genie King, Ján Ibn Ján—who also built the Pyramids—before the time of Adam.

BAHRÁM GÚR—*Bahram of the Wild Ass*—a Sassanian Sovereign—had also his Seven Castles (like the King of Bohemia!) each of a different Colour: each with a Royal Mistress within; each of whom tells him a Story, as told in one of the most famous Poems of Persia, written by Amír Khusraw: all these Sevens also figuring (according to Eastern Mysticism) the Seven Heavens; and perhaps the Book itself that Eighth, into which the Mystical Seven transcend, and within which they revolve. The Ruins of Three of those Towers are yet shown by the Peasantry; as also the Swamp in which Bahrám sunk, like the Master of Ravenswood, while pursuing his *Gúr*.

The Palace that to Heav’n his pillars threw,
And Kings the forehead on his threshold drew—

I saw the solitary Ringdove there,
And ‘Coo, coo, coo,’ she cried; and ‘Coo, coo, coo.’

NOTES

This Quatrain Mr. Binning found, among several of Háfiz and others, inscribed by some stray hand among the ruins of Persepolis. The Ringdove's ancient *Pehleví Coo, Coo, Coo*, signifies also in Persian 'Where? Where? Where?' In Attár's 'Bird-parliament' she is reproved by the Leader of the Birds for sitting still, and for ever harping on that one note of lamentation for her lost Yúsuf.

Apropos of Omar's Red Roses in Stanza xix., I am reminded of an old English superstition, that our Anemone Pulsatilla, or purple 'Pasque Flower' (which grows plentifully about the Fleam Dyke, near Cambridge), grows only where Danish blood has been spilt.

(xxi.) A thousand years to each Planet.

(xxxi.) Saturn, Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

(xxxii.) ME-AND-THEE : some dividual Existence or Personality distinct from the Whole.

(xxxvii.) One of the Persian Poets—Attár, I think—has a pretty story about this. A thirsty Traveller dips his hand into a Spring of Water to drink from. By and by comes another who draws up and drinks from an earthen Bowl, and then departs, leaving his Bowl behind him. The first Traveller takes it up for another draught; but is surprised to find that the same Water which had tasted sweet from his own hand tastes bitter from the earthen Bowl. But a Voice—from Heaven, I think—tells him the clay from which the Bowl is made was once *Man*; and, into whatever shape renewed, can never lose the bitter flavour of Mortality.

(xxxix.) The custom of throwing a little Wine on the ground before drinking still continues in Persia, and perhaps generally in the East. Mons. Nicolas considers it 'un signe de libéralité, et en même temps un avertissement que le buveur doit vider sa coupe jusqu'à la dernière goutte.' Is it not more likely an ancient Superstition; a Libation to propitiate Earth, or make her an Accomplice in the illicit Revel? Or, perhaps, to divert the Jealous Eye by some sacrifice of superfluity, as with the Ancients of the West? With Omar we see something more is signified; the precious Liquor is not lost, but sinks into the ground to refresh the dust of some poor Wine-worshipper foregone.

Thus Háfiz, copying Omar in so many ways: 'When thou drinkest Wine pour a draught on the ground. Wherefore fear the Sin which brings to another Gain?'

(xliii.) According to one beautiful Oriental Legend, Azrâel accomplishes his mission by holding to the nostril an Apple from the Tree of Life.

This and the two following Stanzas would have been with-

NOTES

drawn, as somewhat *de trop*, from the Text, but for advice which I least like to disregard.

(LI.) From Máh to Máhi ; from Fish to Moon.

(LVI.) A Jest, of course, at his Studies. A curious mathematical Quatrain of Omar's has been pointed out to me ; the more curious because almost exactly parallel'd by some Verses of Doctor Donne's, that are quoted in Izaak Walton's Lives ! Here is Omar : ' You and I are the image of a pair of compasses ; though we have two heads (sc. our *feet*) we have one body ; when we have fixed the centre for our circle, we bring our heads (sc. feet) together at the end.' Dr. Donne :

If we be two, we two are so
As stiff twin-compasses are two ;
Thy Soul, the fixt foot, makes no show
To move, but does if the other do.

And though thine in the centre sit,
Yet when my other far does roam,
Thine leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as mine comes home.

Such thou must be to me, who must
Like the other foot obliquely run ;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And me to end where I begun.

(LIX.) The Seventy-two Religions supposed to divide the World, including Islamism, as some think : but others not.

(LX.) Alluding to Sultan Mahmúd's Conquest of India and its dark people.

(LXVIII.) *Fánúsi khiyál*, a Magic-lantern still used in India ; the cylindrical Interior being painted with various Figures, and so lightly poised and ventilated as to revolve round the lighted Candle within.

(LXX.) A very mysterious Line in the Original :

O dánad O dánad O dánad O——

breaking off something like our Wood-pigeon's Note, which she is said to take up just where she left off.

(LXXV.) Parwín and Mushtarí—The Pleiads and Jupiter.

(LXXXVII.) This Relation of Pot and Potter to Man and his Maker figures far and wide in the Literature of the World, from the time of the Hebrew Prophets to the present ; when it may

NOTES

finally take the name of 'Pot theism,' by which Mr. Carlyle ridiculed Sterling's 'Pantheism.' My Sheikh, whose knowledge flows in from all quarters, writes to me—

'Apropos of old Omar's Pots, did I ever tell you the sentence I found in Bishop Pearson on the Creed? "Thus are we wholly at the disposal of His will, and our present and future condition framed and ordered by His free, but wise and just, decrees." *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?* (Rom. ix. 21.) And can that earth-artificer have a freer power over his *brother potsherd* (both being made of the same metal), than God hath over him, who, by the strange fecundity of His omnipotent power, first made the clay out of nothing, and then him out of that?"'

And again—from a very different quarter—"I had to refer the other day to Aristophanes, and came by chance on a curious Speaking-pot story in the *Vespæ*, which I had quite forgotten.

Φιλοκλέων. "Ακουε, μὴ φεῦγ' ἐν Συβάρει γυνή ποτε 1. 1435
κατέαξ' ἐχίνον.

Κατήγορος. Ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι.
Φι. Οὐχίνος οὖν ἔχων τιν' ἐπεμαρτύρατο.
Εἰθ' ἡ Συβαρίτις εἶπεν, εἰ ναὶ τὰν κόραν
τὴν μαρτυρίαν ταύτην ἔασας, ἐν τάχει
ἐπίδεσμον ἐπρίω, νοῦν ἂν εἶχες πλείονα.

'The Pot calls a bystander to be a witness to his bad treatment. The woman says, "If, by Proserpine, instead of all this 'testifying' (comp. Cuddie and his mother in *Old Mortality*!) you would buy yourself a trivet, it would show more sense in you!" The Scholiast explains *echinus* as ἄγγος τι ἐκ κεράμων.'

One more illustration for the oddity's sake from the *Autobiography of a Cornish Rector*, by the late James Hamley Tregenna, 1871.

'There was one old Fellow in our Company—he was so like a Figure in the *Pilgrim's Progress* that Richard always called him the "ALLEGORY," with a long white beard—a rare Appendage in those days—and a Face the colour of which seemed to have been baked in, like the Faces one used to see on Earthenware Jugs. In our Country-dialect Earthenware is called "*Clome*"; so the Boys of the Village used to shout out after him—"Go back to the Potter, old Clome-face, and get baked over again." For the "Allegory," though shrewd enough in most things, had the reputation of being "*saift-baked*," i.e. of weak intellect.'

NOTES

(xc.) At the Close of the Fasting Month, Ramazán (which makes the Musulman unhealthy and unamiable), the first Glimpse of the New Moon (who rules their division of the Year) is looked for with the utmost Anxiety, and hailed with Acclamation. Then it is that the Porter's Knot may be heard—toward the *Cellar*. Omar has elsewhere a pretty Quatrain about the same Moon—

‘Be of Good Cheer—the sullen Month will die,
And a young Moon requite us by and by :
Look how the Old one, meagre, bent, and wan
With Age and Fast, is fainting from the Sky !’

VARIATIONS
BETWEEN THE SECOND, THIRD AND FOURTH
EDITIONS OF

OMAR KHAYYÁM

STANZA

I. In ed. 2 :

Wake ! For the Sun behind yon Eastern height
Has chased the Session of the Stars from Night ;
And, to the field of Heav'n ascending, strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

In the first draught of ed. 3 the first and second lines stood
thus :

Wake ! For the Sun before him into Night
A Signal flung that put the Stars to flight.

II. In ed. 2 :

Why lags the drowsy Worshipper outside ?

V. In edd. 2 and 3 :

But still a Ruby gushes from the Vine.

IX. In ed. 2 :

Morning a thousand Roses brings, you say.

X. In ed. 2 :

Let Rustum cry 'To battle !' as he likes,
Or Hátim Tai 'To Supper !' heed not you.

VARIATIONS

STANZA

- x. In ed. 3 :
Let Zál and Rustum thunder as they will.
- xii. In ed. 2 :
Here with a little Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou etc.
- xiii. In ed. 2 :
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Promise go,
Nor heed the music of a distant Drum !
- xv. In the first line, ed. 2 and the first draught of ed. 3 have
For those, etc.
- xvi. In line 4, edd. 2 and 3 read 'was gone.'
- xx. In ed. 2 :
And this delightful Herb whose living Green
Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean.
- xxi. In edd. 2 and 3, 'past Regret.'
- xxii. In edd. 2 and 3 :
That from his Vintage rolling Time has prest.
- xxvi. In edd. 2 and 3 :
Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust.
- xxvii. In ed. 2 :
Came out by the same door as in I went.
- xxviii. In edd. 2 and 3 :
And with my own hand wrought to make it grow.
- xxx. In ed. 2 :
Ah, contrite Heav'n endowed us with the Vine
To drug the memory of that insolence !
- xxxi. In ed. 2 :
And many Knots unravel'd by the Road.
- xxxii. In ed. 2 and 3 :
There was a Veil through which I could not see.

VARIATIONS

STANZA

- XXXIII. In ed. 2 :
 Nor Heaven, with those eternal Signs reveal'd.
- XXXIV. In ed. 2 :
 Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind
 The Veil of Universe I cried to find
 A Lamp to guide me through the darkness ; and
 Something then said—' An Understanding blind.'
- XXXV. In ed. 2 :
 I lean'd, the secret Well of Life to learn.
- XXXVI. In ed. 2 :
 And drink ; and that impassive Lip I kiss'd.
- XXXVIII. In ed. 2 the only difference is 'For' instead of 'And' in
 the first line ; but in the first draught of ed. 3 the
 stanza appeared thus :
 For, in your Ear a moment—of the same
 Poor Earth from which that Human Whisper came,
 The luckless Mould in which Mankind was cast
 They did compose, and call'd him by the name.
- In ed. 3 the first line was altered to
 Listen—a moment listen !—Of the same etc.
- XXXIX. In ed. 2 :
 On the parcht herbage but may steal below.
- XL. In ed. 2 :
 As then the Tulip for her wonted sup
 Of Heavenly Vintage lifts her chalice up,
 Do you, twin offspring of the soil, till Heav'n
 To Earth invert you like an empty Cup.
- In the first draught of ed. 3 the stanza is the same as in
 edd. 3 and 4, except that the second line is
 Of Wine from Heav'n her little Tass lifts up.
- XLI. In ed. 2 and the first draught of ed. 3 :
 Oh, plagued no more with Human or Divine,
 To-morrow's tangle to itself resign.

VARIATIONS

STANZA

- XLII. In ed. 2 :
 And if the Cup you drink, the Lip you press,
 End in what All begins and ends in—Yes ;
 Imagine then you *are* what heretofore
 You *were*—hereafter you shall not be less.
 The first draught of ed. 3 agrees with edd. 3 and 4
 except that the first line is
 And if the Cup, and if the Lip you press.
- XLIII. In ed. 2 :
 So when at last the Angel of the drink
 Of Darkness finds you by the river-brink,
 And, proffering his Cup, invites your Soul
 Forth to your Lips to quaff it—do not shrink.
 In the first draught of ed. 3 the only change made was
 from ‘proffering’ to ‘offering,’ but in ed. 3 the stanza
 assumed the form in which it also appeared in ed.
 4. The change from ‘the Angel’ to ‘that Angel’
 was made in MS. by FitzGerald in a copy of ed. 4.
- XLIV. In ed. 2 :
 Is’t not a shame—is’t not a shame for him
 So long in this Clay suburb to abide !
- XLV. In ed. 2 :
 But that is but a Tent wherein may rest.
- XLVI. In ed. 2 :
 And fear not lest Existence closing *your*
 Account, should lose, or know the type no more.
- XLVII. In ed. 2 :
 As much as Ocean of a pebble-cast.
 In ed. 3 :
 As the SEV’N SEAS should heed a pebble-cast.
- XLVIII. In ed. 2 :
 One Moment in Annihilation’s Waste,
 One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste—
 The Stars are setting, and the Caravan
 Draws to the Dawn of Nothing—Oh make haste.

VARIATIONS

STANZA

- XLVIII. In the first draught of ed. 3 the third line originally stood :
 Before the starting Caravan has reach'd
 the rest of the stanza being as in edd. 3 and 4.
- XLIX. In ed. 2 :
 A Hair, they say, divides the False and True.
 The change from 'does' to 'may' in the last line was
 made by FitzGerald in MS.
- L. In ed. 2.
 A Hair, they say, divides the False and True.
- LII. In edd. 2 and 3 :
 He does Himself contrive, enact, behold.
- LIII. In the first draught of ed. 3 :
 To-morrow, when You shall be You no more.
- LIV. In ed. 2 :
 Better be merry with the fruitful Grape.
- LV. In ed. 2 :
 You know, my Friends, how bravely in my House
 For a new Marriage I did make Carouse.
- LVII. In ed. 2 :
 Have squared the Year to Human Compass, eh ?
 If so, by striking from the Calendar.
- LXII. In ed. 2 :
 When the frail Cup is crumbled into Dust !
- LXIII. In ed. 2 :
 The Flower that once is blown for ever dies.
- LXV. In edd. 2 and 3 :
 They told their fellows, and to Sleep return'd.
- LXVI. In ed 2 :
 And after many days my Soul return'd
 And said, 'Behold, Myself am Heav'n and Hell.'

VARIATIONS

STANZA

- LXVII. In edd. 2 and 3 :
 And Hell the Shadow of a Soul on fire.
- LXVIII. In ed. 2 :
 Of visionary Shapes that come and go
 Round with this Sun-illumin'd Lantern held.
 Ed. 3 also retains 'this.'
- LXIX. In edd. 2 and 3 :
 Impotent Pieces of the Game He plays.
- LXX. In edd. 2 and 3 :
 But Right or Left as strikes the Player goes.
- LXXI. In ed. 3, 'Piety and Wit.'
- LXXII. In ed. 2 and the first draught of ed. 3 :
 And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky.
 In edd. 2 and 3 :
 As impotently rolls as you or I.
- LXXIX. In edd. 2 and 3 :
 Pure Gold for what he lent us dross-allay'd.
- LXXXI. In ed. 2 :
 For all the Sin the Face of wretched Man
 Is black with—Man's Forgiveness give—and take !
- LXXXIII. In ed. 2 :
 And once again there gather'd a scarce heard
 Whisper among them ; as it were, the stirr'd
 Ashes of some all but extinguish'd Tongue
 Which mine ear kindled into living Word.
- LXXXIV. In ed. 2 :
 My Substance from the common Earth was ta'en,
 That He who subtly wrought me into Shape
 Should stamp me back to shapeless Earth again ?

VARIATIONS

STANZA

LXXXV.

In ed. 2 :

Another said—‘ Why, ne’er a peevish Boy
Would break the Cup from which he drank in Joy ;
Shall He that of His own free Fancy made
The Vessel, in an after-rage destroy ! ’

LXXXVI.

In ed. 2 :

None answer’d this ; but after silence spake.

LXXXVII.

In ed. 2 :

Thus with the Dead as with the Living, *What ?*
And *Why ?* so ready, but the *Wherefor* not,
One on a sudden peevishly exclaim’d,
‘ Which is the Potter, pray, and which the Pot ? ’

In ed. 3 the last line reads :

Who makes—Who sells—Who buys—Who *is* the
Pot ?

LXXXVIII.

In ed. 2 :

Said one—‘ Folks of a surly Master tell,
And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell ;
They talk of some sharp Trial of us—Pish !
He’s a Good Fellow, and ’twill all be well.’

In the first draught of ed. 3 the stanza begins :

‘ Why,’ said another, ‘ Dismal people tell
Of an old Savage who will toss to Hell
The luckless Pots, etc.’

LXXXIX.

In ed. 2 :

‘ Well,’ said another, ‘ Whoso will, let try.’

XC.

In ed. 2 :

One spied the little Crescent all were seeking.

XCI.

In ed. 2 :

And wash my Body whence the Life has died.

XCIII.

In ed. 2 :

Have done my credit in Men’s eye much wrong.

VARIATIONS

STANZA

xcv. In ed. 2 :

I often wonder what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the ware they sell.

xcvii. In ed. 2 :

Toward which the fainting Traveller might spring.

xcviii. In ed. 2 :

Oh if the World were but to re-create,
That we might catch ere closed the Book of Fate,
And make The Writer on a fairer leaf
Inscribe our names, or quite obliterate !

xcix. In ed. 2 :

Ah Love ! could you and I with Fate conspire.

c. In ed. 2 :

But see ! The rising Moon of Heav'n again
Looks for us, Sweet-heart, through the quivering Plane :
How oft hereafter rising will she look
Among those leaves—for one of us in vain ?

ci. In ed. 2 :

And when Yourself with silver Foot shall pass.

In the first draught of ed. 3 'Foot' is changed to 'step.'

In ed. 3 :

And in your blissful errand reach the spot.

STANZAS WHICH APPEAR IN THE SECOND EDITION ONLY

- xiv. Were it not Folly, Spider-like to spin
 The Thread of present Life away to win—
 What ? for ourselves, who know not if we shall
 Breathe out the very Breath we now breathe in !
- xx. (This stanza is quoted in the note to stanza xviii. in the
 third and fourth editions.)
- xxviii. Another Voice, when I am sleeping, cries,
 ‘The Flower should open with the Morning skies.’
 And a retreating Whisper, as I wake—
 ‘The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.’
- xliv. Do you, within your little hour of Grace,
 The waving Cypress in your Arms enlace,
 Before the Mother back into her arms
 Fold, and dissolve you in a last embrace.
- lxv. If but the Vine and Love-abjuring Band
 Are in the Prophet’s Paradise to stand,
 Alack, I doubt the Prophet’s Paradise
 Were empty as the hollow of one’s Hand.
- lxxvii. For let Philosopher and Doctor preach
 Of what they will, and what they will not—each
 Is but one Link in an eternal Chain
 That none can slip, nor break, nor over-reach.

STANZAS IN SECOND EDITION ONLY

lxxxvi. Nay, but, for terror of his wrathful Face,
 I swear I will not call Injustice Grace,
 Not one Good Fellow of the Tavern but
 Would kick so poor a Coward from the place.

xc. And once again there gather'd a scarce heard
 Whisper among them ; as it were, the stirr'd
 Ashes of some all but extinguisht Tongue,
 Which mine ear kindled into living Word.

(In the third and fourth editions stanza lxxxiii. takes the place of this.)

xcix. Whither resorting from the vernal Heat
 Shall Old Acquaintance Old Acquaintance greet,
 Under the Branch that leans above the Wall
 To shed his Blossom over head and feet.

cvii. Better, oh better, cancel from the Scroll
 Of Universe one luckless Human Soul,
 Than drop by drop enlarge the Flood that rolls
 Hoarser with Anguish as the Ages Roll.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF STANZAS IN THE FOUR EDITIONS

Ed. 1	Ed. 2	Edd. 3 and 4	Ed. 1	Ed. 2	Edd. 3 and 4
I	I	I	XXVIII	XXXI	XXVIII
II	II	II	XXIX	XXXII	XXIX
III	III	III	XXX	XXXIII	XXX
IV	IV	IV	XXXI	XXXIV	XXXI
V	V	V	XXXII	XXXV	XXXII
VI	VI	VI	XXXIII	XXXVII	XXXIV
VII	VII	VII	XXXIV	XXXVIII	XXXV
VIII	IX	IX	XXXV	XXXIX	XXXVI
IX	X	X	XXXVI	XL	XXXVII
X	XI	XI	XXXVII		
XI	XII	XII	XXXVIII	XLIX	XLVIII
XII	XIII	XIII	XXXIX	LVI	LIV
XIII	XV	XIV	XL	LVII	LV
XIV	XVII	XVI	XLI	LVIII	LVI
XV	XVI	XV	XLII	LX	LVIII
XVI	XVIII	XVII	XLIII	LXI	LIX
XVII	XIX	XVIII	XLIV	LXII	LX
XVIII	XXIV	XIX	XLV		
XIX	XXV	XX	XLVI	LXXIII	LXVIII
XX	XXI	XXI	XLVII	XLV	XLII
XXI	XXII	XXII	XLVIII	XLVI	XLIII
XXII	XXIII	XXIII	XLIX	LXXIV	LXIX
XXIII	XXVI	XXIV	L	LXXV	LXX
XXIV	XXVII	XXV	LI	LXXVI	LXXI
XXV	XXIX	XXVI	LII	LXXVIII	LXXII
XXVI	LXVI	LXIII	LIII	LXXIX	LXXIII
XXVII	XXX	XXVII	LIV	LXXXI	LXXV

COMPARATIVE TABLE

Ed. 1	Ed. 2	Edd. 3 and 4	Ed. 1	Ed. 2	Edd. 3 and 4
LV	LXXXII	LXXVI		XLIV	
LVI	LXXXIII	LXXVII		XLVII	XLVI
LVII	LXXXVII	LXXX		XLVIII	XLVII
LVIII	LXXXVIII	LXXXI			XLIX
LIX	LXXXIX	LXXXII		LI	L
LX	XCIV	LXXXVII		LII	LI
LXI	XCI	LXXXIV		LIII	LII
LXII	XCII	LXXXV		LIV	LIII
LXIII	XCIII	LXXXVI		LV	XL
LXIV	XCIV	LXXXVIII		LIX	LVII
LXV	XCVI	LXXXIX		LXIII	LXI
LXVI	XCVII	XC		LXIV	LXII
LXVII	XCVIII	XC		LXV	
LXVIII	C	XCII		LXVII	LXIV
LXIX	CI	XCIII		LXVIII	LXV
LXX	CII	XCIV	Preface.	LXIX	XLIV
LXXI	CIII	XCIV	do.	LXX	XLV
LXXII	CIV	XCVI		LXXI	LXVI
LXXIII	CVIII	XCIX		LXXII	LXVII
LXXIV	CIX	C		LXXVII	
LXXV	CX	CI		LXXX	LXXIV
	VIII	VIII		LXXXIV	LXXXVIII
	XIV			LXXXV	LXXXIX
				LXXXVI	
Note on		Note on		XC	LXXXIII
XVII	XX	XVIII		XCIX	
	XXVIII			CV	XCVII
	XXXVI	XXXIII		CVI	XCVIII
	XLI	XXXVIII		CVII	
	XLII	XXXIX			
	XLIII	XL			

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

NOTE BY THE EDITOR

It must be admitted that FitzGerald took great liberties with the original in his version of Omar Khayyám. The first stanza is entirely his own, and in stanza xxxiii. of the fourth edition (xxxvi. in the second) he has introduced two lines from Attár (See Letters, ii. 62). In Stanza lxxxı. (fourth edition), writes Professor Cowell, "There is no original for the line about the snake : I have looked for it in vain in Nicolas ; but I have always supposed that the last line is FitzGerald's mistaken version of Quatr. 236 in Nicolas's ed. which runs thus :

"O thou who knowest the secrets of every one's mind,
Who graspest every one's hand in the hour of weakness,
O God, give me repentance and accept my excuses,
O thou who givest repentance and acceptest the excuses of every
one.

"FitzGerald mistook the meaning of *giving* and *accepting* as used here, and so invented his last line out of his own mistake. I wrote to him about it when I was in Calcutta ; but he never cared to alter it."

W. A. W.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

AN ALLEGORY

TRANSLATED FROM THE PERSIAN

OF

JÁMÍ

LETTER TO PROFESSOR COWELL

MY DEAR COWELL,

Two years ago, when we began (I for the first time) to read this Poem together, I wanted you to translate it, as something that should interest a few who are worth interesting. You, however, did not see the way clear then, and had Aristotle pulling you by one Shoulder and Prakrit Vararuchi by the other, so as indeed to have hindered you up to this time completing a Version of Háfiz' best Odes which you had then happily begun. So, continuing to like old Jámí more and more, I must try my hand upon him ; and here is my reduced Version of a small Original. What Scholarship it has is yours, my Master in Persian, and so much beside ; who are no further answerable for *all* than by well liking and wishing publisht what you may scarce have Leisure to find due fault with.

Had all the Poem been like Parts, it would have been all translated, and in such Prose lines as you measure Háfiz in, and such as any one

LETTER TO

should adopt who does not feel himself so much of a Poet as him he translates and some he translates for—before whom it is best to lay the raw material as genuine as may be, to work up to their own better Fancies. But, unlike Háfiz' best—(whose Sonnets are sometimes as close packt as Shakespeare's, which they resemble in more ways than one)—Jámí, you know, like his Countrymen generally, is very diffuse in what he tells and his way of telling it. The very structure of the Persian Couplet—(here, like people on the Stage, I am repeating to you what you know, with an Eye to the small Audience beyond)—so often ending with the same Word, or Two Words, if but the foregoing Syllable secure a lawful Rhyme, so often makes the Second Line but a slightly varied Repetition, or Modification of the First, and gets slowly over Ground often hardly worth gaining. This iteration is common indeed to the Hebrew Psalms and Proverbs—where, however, the Value of the Repetition is different. In your Háfiz also, not Two only, but Eight or Ten Lines perhaps are tied to the same Close of Two—or *Three*—words; a verbal Ingenuity as much valued in the East as better Thought. And how many of all the Odes called his, more and fewer in various Copies, do you yourself care to deal with?—And in the better ones how often some lines, as I think for this reason, unworthy of the Rest—interpolated perhaps from the Mouths of his many Devotees,

PROFESSOR COWELL

Mystical and Sensual—or crept into Manuscripts of which he never arranged or corrected one from the First ?

This, together with the confined Action of Persian Grammar, whose organic simplicity seems to me its difficulty when applied, makes the Line by Line Translation of a Poem not line by line precious tedious in proportion to its length. Especially—(what the Sonnet does not feel)—in the Narrative ; which I found when once eased in its Collar, and yet missing somewhat of rhythmical Amble, somehow, and not without resistance on my part, swerved into that ‘easy road’ of Verse—easiest as unbeset with any exigencies of Rhyme. Those little Stories, too, which you thought untractable, but which have their Use as well as Humour by way of quaint Interlude Music between the little Acts, felt ill at ease in solemn Lowth-Isaiah Prose, and had learn’d their tune, you know, before even Hiawatha came to teach people to quarrel about it. Till, one part drawing on another, the Whole grew to the present form.

As for the much bodily omitted—it may be readily guessed that an Asiatic of the 15th Century might say much on such a subject that an Englishman of the 19th would not care to read. Not that our Jámí is ever *licentious* like his Contemporary Chaucer, nor like Chaucer’s Posterity in Times that called themselves more Civil. But better Men will not now endure a simplicity

LETTER TO

of Speech that Worse men abuse. Then the many more, and foolisher, Stories—preliminary Te Deums to Allah and Allah's-shadow Sháh—very much about Alef Noses, Eyebrows like inverted Núns, drunken Narcissus Eyes—and that eternal Moon Face which never wanes from Persia—of all which there is surely enough in this Glimpse of the Original. No doubt some Oriental character escapes—the Story sometimes becomes too Skin and Bone without due interval of even Stupid and Bad. Of the two Evils?—At least what I have chosen is least in point of bulk ; scarcely in proportion with the length of its Apology which, as usual, probably discharges one's own Conscience at too great a Price ; people at once turning against you the Arms they might have wanted had you not laid them down. However it may be with this, I am sure a complete Translation—even in Prose—would not have been a readable one—which, after all, is a useful property of most Books, even of Poetry.

In studying the Original, you know, one gets contentedly carried over barren Ground in a new Land of Language—excited by chasing any new Game that will but show Sport ; the most worthless to win asking perhaps all the sharper Energy to pursue, and so far yielding all the more Satisfaction when run down. Especially, cheered on as I was by such a Huntsman as poor Dog of a Persian Scholar never hunted with before ; and moreover—but that was rather in

PROFESSOR COWELL

the Spanish Sierras—by the Presence of a Lady in the Field, silently brightening about us like Aurora's Self, or chiming in with musical Encouragement that all we started and ran down must be Royal Game !

Ah, happy Days ! When shall we Three meet again—when dip in that unreturning Tide of Time and Circumstance !—In those Meadows far from the World, it seemed, as Saláman's Island—before an Iron Railway broke the Heart of that Happy Valley whose Gossip was the Millwheel, and Visitors the Summer Airs that momentarily ruffled the sleepy Stream that turned it as they chased one another over to lose themselves in Whispers in the Copse beyond. Or returning—I suppose you remember whose Lines they are—

When Winter Skies were tinged with Crimson still
Where Thornbush nestles on the quiet hill,
And the live Amber round the setting Sun,
Lighting the Labourer home whose Work is done,
Burn'd like a Golden Angel-ground above
The solitary Home of Peace and Love—

at such an hour drawing home together for a fireside Night of it with Æschylus or Calderon in the Cottage, whose walls, modest almost as those of the Poor who clustered—and with good reason—round, make to my Eyes the Towered Crown of Oxford hanging in the Horizon, and with all Honour won, but a dingy Vapour in

LETTER TO

Comparison. And now, should they beckon from the terrible Ganges, and this little Book begun as a happy Record of past, and pledge perhaps of future, Fellowship in Study, darken already with the shadow of everlasting Farewell !

But to turn from you Two to a Public—nearly as numerous—(with whom, by the way, this Letter may die without a name that *you* know very well how to supply),—here is the best I could make of Jámí's Poem—'Ouvrage de peu d'étendue,' says the Biographie Universelle, and, whatever that means, here collapsed into a nutshell Epic indeed ; whose Story however, if nothing else, may interest some Scholars as one of Persian Mysticism—perhaps the grand Mystery of all Religions—an Allegory fairly devised and carried out—dramatically culminating as it goes on ; and told as to this day the East loves to tell her Story, illustrated by Fables and Tales, so often (as we read in the latest Travels) at the expense of the poor Arab of the Desert.

The Proper Names—and some other Words peculiar to the East—are printed as near as may be to their native shape and sound—'Sulaymán' for Solomon—'Yúsuf' for Joseph, &c., as being not only more musical, but retaining their Oriental flavour unalloyed with European Association. The *accented* Vowels are to be pronounced long, as in Italian—Salámán—Absál—Shírín, &c.

PROFESSOR COWELL

The Original is in rhymed Couplets of this measure—

- 0 - - 1 - 0 - - 1 - 0 - 1 1

which those who like Monkish Latin may remember in

Dum Salámán verba Regis cogitat,
Pectus intrá de profundis æstuat.

or in English—by way of asking, ‘your Clemency
for us and for our Tragedy’—

Of Salámán and of Absál hear the Song ;
Little wants Man here below, nor little long.

[1856]

NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE

*Drawn from Rosenzweig's 'Biographische Notizen'
of the Poet.*

NÚRUDDÍN ABDURRAHMAN, Son of Mauláná Nizámuddín Ahmed, and descended on the Mother's side from One of the Four great 'FATHERS' of Islam, was born A.H. 817, A.D. 1414, in Jám, a little Town of Khorásán, whither his Grandfather had removed from Desht of Ispahán and from which the poet ultimately took his Takhallus, or Poetic name, JÁMÍ. This word also signifies 'A Cup ;' wherefore, he says, 'Born in Jám, and dipt in the 'Jám' of Holy Lore, for a double reason I must be called JÁMÍ in the Book of Song.'¹ He was celebrated afterwards in other Oriental Titles—'Lord of Poets'—'Elephant of Wisdom,' &c., but latterly liked to call himself 'The Ancient of Herát,' where he mainly resided, and eventually died.

¹ He elsewhere plays upon his name, imploring God that he may be accepted as a Cup to pass about that Spiritual Wine of which the Persian Mystical Poets make so much.

NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE

When Five Years old he received the name of Núruddín, the 'Light of Faith,' and even so early began to show the Metal, and take the Stamp that distinguished him through Life. In 1419, a famous Sheikh, Khwájah Mohammed Pársá, then in the last Year of his Life, was being carried through Jám. 'I was not then Five Years old,' says Jámí, 'and my Father, who with his Friends went forth to salute him, had me carried on the Shoulders of one of the Family and set down before the Litter of the Sheikh, who gave a Nosegay into my hand. Sixty Years have passed, and methinks I now see before me the bright Image of the Holy Man, and feel the Blessing of his Aspect, from which I date my after Devotion to that Brotherhood in which I hope to be enrolled.'

So again, when Mauláná Fakhruddín Loristání had alighted at his Mother's house—'I was then so little that he set me upon his Knee, and with his Fingers drawing the Letters of "ALÍ" and "OMAR" in the Air, laughed with delight to hear me spell them. He also by his Goodness sowed in my Heart the Seed of his Devotion, which has grown to Increase within me—in which I hope to live, and in which to die. Oh God ! Dervish let me live, and Dervish die ; and in the Company of the Dervish do Thou quicken me to life again !'

Jámí first went to a School at Herát ; and afterward to one founded by the Great Timúr at

NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE

Samarcand. There he not only outstript his Fellow-students in the very Encyclopædic Studies of Persian Education, but even puzzled his Doctors in Logic, Astronomy, and Theology ; who, however, with unresenting Gravity welcomed him—‘Lo ! a new Light added to our Galaxy !’—And among them in the wider Field of Samarcand he might have liked to remain, had not a Dream recalled him to Herát. A Vision of the Great Súfí Master there, Mohammed Saaduddin Káshgharí, appeared to him in his Sleep, and bade him return to One who would satisfy all Desire. Jamí returned to Herát ; he saw the Sheikh discoursing with his Disciples by the Door of the Great Mosque ; day after day passed him by without daring to present himself ; but the Master’s Eye was upon him ; day by day drew him nearer and nearer—till at last the Sheikh announces to those about him—‘Lo ! this Day have I taken a Falcon in my Snare !’

Under him Jámí began his Súfí Noviciate, with such Devotion, both to Study and Master, that going, he tells us, but for one Summer Holiday into the Country, a single Line sufficed to ‘lure the Tassel-gentle back again ;’

Lo ! here am I, and Thou look’st on the Rose !’

By-and-by he withdrew, by due course of Súfí Instruction, into Solitude so long and profound, that on his return to Men he had

NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE

almost lost the Power of Converse with them. At last, when duly taught, and duly authorized to teach as Súfí Doctor, he yet would not take upon himself so to do, though solicited by those who had seen such a Vision of him as had drawn himself to Herát ; and not till the Evening of his Life was he to be seen taking that place by the Mosque which his departed Master had been used to occupy before.

Meanwhile he had become Poet, which no doubt winged his Reputation and Doctrine far and wide through a People so susceptible of poetic impulse.

‘ A Thousand times,’ he says, ‘ I have repented of such Employment ; but I could no more shirk it than one can shirk what the Pen of Fate has written on his Forehead ’—‘ As Poet I have resounded through the World ; Heaven filled itself with my Song, and the Bride of Time adorned her Ears and Neck with the Pearls of my Verse, whose coming Caravan the Persian Háfiz and Saadí came forth gladly to salute, and the Indian Khosrau and Hasan hailed as a Wonder of the World.’ ‘ The Kings of India and Rúm greet me by Letter : the Lords of Irák and Tabríz load me with Gifts ; and what shall I say of those of Khorásán, who drown me in an Ocean of Munificence ? ’

This, though Oriental, is scarcely bombast. Jámí was honoured by Princes at home and abroad, at the very time they were cutting one

NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE

another's Throats ; by his own Sultan Abú Saïd ; by Hasan Beg of Mesopotamia—' Lord of Tabríz '—by whom Abú Saïd was defeated, dethroned, and slain ; by Mohammed II. of Turkey— ' King of Rúm '—who in his turn defeated Hasan ; and lastly by Husein Mírzá Baikará, who somehow made away with the Prince whom Hasan had set up in Abú Saïd's Place at Herát. Such is the House that Jack builds in Persia.

As Hasan Beg, however—the USUNCASSAN of old European Annals—is singularly connected with the present Poem, and with probably the most important event in Jámí's Life, I will briefly follow the Steps that led to that as well as other Princely Intercourse.

In A.H. 877, A.D. 1472, Jámí set off on his Pilgrimage to Mecca, as every True Believer who could afford it was expected once in his Life to do. He, and, on his Account, the Caravan he went with, were honourably and safely escorted through the interjacent Countries by order of their several Potentates as far as Baghdád. There Jámí fell into trouble by the Treachery of a Follower whom he had reproved, and who misquoted his Verse into disparagement of ALÍ, the Darling Imám of Persia. This, getting wind at Baghdád, was there brought to solemn Tribunal. Jámí came victoriously off ; his Accuser was pilloried with a dockt Beard in Baghdád Market-place : but the Poet was so ill pleased with the stupidity of those who had believed the Report,

NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE

that, in an after Poem, he called for a Cup of Wine to seal up Lips of whose Utterance the Men of Baghdád were unworthy.

After four months' stay there, during which he visited at Helleh the Tomb of Alí's Son Husein, who had fallen at Kerbela, he set forth again—to Najaf, (where he says his Camel sprang forward at sight of Alí's own Tomb)—crossed the Desert in twenty-two days, continually meditating on the Prophet's Glory, to Medina ; and so at last to MECCA, where, as he sang in a Ghazal, he went through all Mohammedan Ceremony with a Mystical Understanding of his Own.

He then turned Homeward : was entertained for forty-five days at Damascus, which he left the very Day before the Turkish Mohammed's Envoys come with 5000 Ducats to carry him to Constantinople. On arriving at Amida, the Capital of Mesopotamia, he found War broken out and in full Flame between that Sultan and Hasan Beg, King of the Country, who caused Jámí to be honourably escorted through the dangerous Roads to Tabríz ; there received him in full Diván, and would fain have him abide at his Court awhile. Jámí, however, was intent on Home, and once more seeing his aged Mother—for *he* was turned of Sixty—and at last reached Herát in the Month of Shaabán, 1473, after the Average Year's absence.

This is the HASAN, 'in Name and Nature *Handsome*' (and so described by some Venetian

NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE

Ambassadors of the Time), who was Father of YAKÚB BEG, to whom Jamí dedicated the following Poem ; and who, after the due murder of an Elder Brother, succeeded to the Throne ; till all the Dynasties of 'Black and White Sheep' together were swept away a few years after by Ismaíl, Founder of the Sofí Dynasty in Persia.

Arrived at home, Jámí found Husein Mírzá Baikará, last of the Timuridæ, seated on the Throne there, and ready to receive him with open Arms. Nizámuddín Alí Shír, Husein's Vizír, a Poet too, had hailed in Verse the Poet's Advent from Damascus as 'The Moon rising in the West ;' and they both continued affectionately to honour him as long as he lived.

Jámí sickened of his mortal Illness on the 13th of Moharrem, 1492—a Sunday. His Pulse began to fail on the following Friday, about the Hour of Morning Prayer, and stopped at the very moment when the Muezzín began to call to Evening. He had lived Eighty-one Years. Sultan Husein undertook the pompous Burial of one whose Glory it was to have lived and died in Dervish Poverty ; the Dignitaries of the Kingdom followed him to the Grave ; where twenty days afterward was recited in presence of the Sultan and his Court an Eulogy composed by the Vizír, who also laid the first Stone of a Monument to his Friend's Memory—the first Stone of 'Tarbet'i Jámí,' in the Street of Meshhed, a principal Thoro'fare of the City of Herát. For,

NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE

says Rosenzweig, it must be kept in mind that Jámí was revered not only as a Poet and Philosopher, but as a Saint also ; who not only might work a Miracle himself, but leave such a Power lingering about his Tomb. It was known that an Arab, who had falsely accused him of selling a Camel he knew to be unsound, died very shortly after, as Jámí had predicted, and on the very selfsame spot where the Camel fell. And that libellous Rogue at Baghdád—he, putting his hand into his Horse's Nose-bag to see if the beast had finisht his Corn, had his Forefinger bitten off by the same—from which 'Verstümmung' he soon died—I suppose, as he ought, of Lock-jaw.

The Persians, who are adepts at much elegant Ingenuity, are fond of commemorating Events by some analogous Word or Sentence whose Letters, cabalistically corresponding to certain Numbers, compose the Date required. In Jámí's case they have hit upon the word 'Kás,' A Cup, whose signification brings his own name to Memory, and whose relative letters make up his 81 years. They have *Tárikhs* also for remembering the Year of his Death : Rosenzweig gives some ; but Ouseley the prettiest of all ;—

Dúd az Khorásán bar ámed—

'The smoke' of Sighs 'went up from Khorásán.'

No Biographer, says Rosenzweig cautiously, records of Jámí's having more than one Wife

NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE

(Granddaughter of his Master Sheikh) and Four Sons ; which, however, are Five too many for the Doctrine of this Poem. Of the Sons, Three died Infant ; and the Fourth (born to him in very old Age), and for whom he wrote some Elementary Tracts, and the more famous Beháristán,' lived but a few years, and was remembered by his Father in the Preface to his Khiradnáma-i Iskander — Alexander's Wisdom-book — which perhaps had also been begun for the Boy's Instruction. He had likewise a nephew, one Mauláná Abdullah, who was ambitious of following his Uncle's Footsteps in Poetry. Jámí first dissuaded him ; then, by way of trial whether he had a Talent as well as a Taste, bade him imitate Firdausí's Satire on Sháh Mahmúd. The Nephew did so well, that Jámí then encouraged him to proceed ; himself wrote the first Couplet of his First (and most celebrated) Poem—Laila and Majnún—

This Book of which the Pen has now laid the Foundation,
May the diploma of Acceptance one day befall it,—

and Abdullah went on to write that and four other Poems which Persia continues to delight in to the present day, remembering their Author under his Takhallus of HÁTIFÍ—'The Voice from Heaven'—and Last of the classic Poets of Persia.

Of Jámí's literary Offspring, Rosenzweig numbers forty-four. But Shír Khán Lúdí in his

NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE

‘Memoirs of the Poets,’ says Ouseley, accounts him Author of *Ninety-nine* Volumes of Grammar, Poetry, and Theology, which, he says, ‘continue to be universally admired in all parts of the Eastern World, Írán, Túrán, and Hindústán’—copied some of them into precious Manuscripts, illuminated with Gold and Painting, by the greatest Penmen and Artists of the time; one such—the ‘Beháristán’—said to have cost some thousands of pounds—autographed as their own by two Sovereign Descendants of TIMÚR; and now repositied away from ‘the Drums and Tramlings’ of Oriental Conquest in the tranquil seclusion of an English library.

With us, his Name is almost wholly associated with his ‘Yúsuf and Zulaikhá;’ the ‘Beháristán’ aforesaid: and this present ‘Salámán and Absál,’ which he tells us is like to be the last product of his Old Age. And these three Poems count for three of the brother Stars of that Constellation into which his seven best Mystical Poems are clustered under the name of ‘HEFT AURANG’—those ‘SEVEN THRONES’ to which we of the West and North give our characteristic name of ‘Great Bear’ and ‘Charles’s Wain.’

This particular Salámán Star, which thus conspicuously figures in Eastern eyes, but is reduced to one of very inferior magnitude as seen

NOTICE OF JÁMÍ'S LIFE

through this English Version,—is one of many Allegories under which the Persian Mystic symbolized an esoteric doctrine which he dared not—and probably could not—more intelligibly reveal. As usual with such Poems in the story-loving East, the main Fable is intersected at every turn with some other subsidiary story, more or less illustrative of the matter in hand : many of these of a comic and grotesque Character mimicking the more serious, as may the Gracioso of the Spanish Drama. As for the metre of the Poem, it is the same as that adopted by Attár, Jeláluddín and other such Poets—and styled, as I have heard, the ‘Metre Royal’—although not having been used by Firdausí for his Sháh-námeh. Thus it runs :

— 0 — 1 — 0 — 1 — 0 — 1

a pace which, to those not used to it, seems to bring one up with too sudden a halt at the end of every line to promise easy travelling through an Epic. It may be represented in Monkish Latin Quantity :

Dum Salámán verba Regis cogitat,
Pectus illi de profundis æstuat ;

or by English accent in two lines that may also plead for us and our Allegory :

Of Salámán and of Absál hear the Song ;
Little wants man here below, nor little long.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

PRELIMINARY INVOCATION.

OH Thou, whose Spirit through this universe,
In which Thou dost involve thyself diffused,
Shall so perchance irradiate human clay
That men, suddenly dazzled, lose themselves
In ecstasy before a mortal shrine
Whose Light is but a Shade of the Divine ;
Not till thy Secret Beauty through the cheek
Of LAILA smite doth she inflame MAJNÚN¹ ;
And not till Thou have kindled SHÍRÍN's Eyes
The hearts of those two Rivals swell with blood.
For Loved and Lover are not but by Thee,
Nor Beauty ;—mortal Beauty but the veil
Thy Heavenly hides behind, and from itself
Feeds, and our hearts yearn after as a Bride
That glances past us veil'd—but ever so
That none the veil from what it hides may know.
How long wilt thou continue thus the World

¹ Well-known Types of Eastern Lovers. SHÍRÍN and her Suitors figure on p. 237.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

To cozen¹ with the fantom of a veil
From which thou only peepest? I would be
Thy Lover, and thine only—I, mine eyes
Seal'd in the light of Thee to all but Thee,
Yea, in the revelation of Thyself
Lost to Myself, and all that Self is not
Within the Double world that is but One.
Thou lurkest under all the forms of Thought,
Under the form of all Created things;
Look where I may, still nothing I discern
But Thee throughout this Universe, wherein
Thyself Thou dost reflect, and through those eyes
Of him whom MAN thou madest, scrutinize.
To thy Harím DIVIDUALITY
No entrance finds—no word of THIS and THAT;
Do Thou my separate and derivèd Self
Make one with thy Essential! Leave me room
On that Diván which leaves no room for Twain;
Lest, like the simple Arab in the tale,
I grow perplext, oh God! 'twixt 'ME' and
 'THEE';
If I—this Spirit that inspires me whence?
If THOU—then what this sensual Impotence?

*From the solitary Desert
Up to Baghdád came a simple
Arab; there amid the rout
Grew bewilder'd of the countless*

¹ The Persian Mystics also represent the Deity dicing with Human Destiny behind the Curtain.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

*People, hither, thither, running,
Coming, going, meeting, parting,
Clamour, clatter, and confusion,
All about him and about.
Travel-wearied, hubbub-dizzy,
Would the simple Arab fain
Get to sleep—‘ But then, on waking,
‘ How,’ quoth he, ‘ amid so many
‘ Waking know Myself again ?’
So, to make the matter certain,
Strung a gourd about his ankle,
And, into a corner creeping,
Baghdád and Himself and People
Soon were blotted from his brain.
But one that heard him and divined
His purpose, slyly crept behind ;
From the Sleeper’s ankle slipping,
Round his own the pumpkin tied,
And laid him down to sleep beside.
By and by the Arab waking
Looks directly for his Signal—
Sees it on another’s Ankle—
Cries aloud, ‘ Oh Good-for-nothing
‘ Rascal to perplex me so !
‘ That by you I am bewilder’d,
‘ Whether I be I or no !
‘ If I—the Pumpkin why on You ?
‘ If YOU—then Where am I, and WHO ?*

AND yet, how long, O Jámí, stringing Verse,
Pearl after pearl, on that old Harp of thine ?

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

Year after year attuning some new Song,
The breath of some old Story¹? Life is gone,
And that last song is not the last ; my Soul
Is spent—and still a Story to be told !
And I, whose back is crooked as the Harp
I still keep tuning through the Night till Day !
That harp untuned by Time—the harper's hand
Shaking with Age—how shall the harper's hand
Repair its cunning, and the sweet old harp
Be modulated as of old ? Methinks
'Twere time to break and cast it in the fire ;
The vain old harp, that, breathing from its strings
No music more to charm the ears of men,
May, from its scented ashes, as it burns,
Breathe resignation to the Harper's soul,
Now that his body looks to dissolution.
My teeth fall out—my two eyes see no more
Till by Feringhí glasses turn'd to four² ;
Pain sits with me sitting behind my knees,
From which I hardly rise unhelped of hand ;
I bow down to my root, and like a Child
Yearn, as is likely, to my Mother Earth,
Upon whose bosom I shall cease to weep,
And on my Mother's bosom fall asleep.³

The House in ruin, and its music heard
No more within, nor at the door of speech,

¹ 'Yúsuf and Zulaikhá,' 'Laila and Majnún,' &c.

² First notice of Spectacles in Oriental Poetry, perhaps.

³ The same Figure is found in Chaucer's 'Pardoner's Tale,' and, I think, in other western poems of that era.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

Better in silence and oblivion
To fold me head and foot, remembering
What THE VOICE whisper'd in the Master's ¹ ear—
'No longer think of Rhyme, but think of ME!'—
Of WHOM?—Of HIM whose Palace the SOUL is,
And Treasure-house—who notices and knows
Its income and out-going, and *then* comes
To fill it when the Stranger is departed.
Yea; but whose Shadow being Earthly Kings,
Their Attributes, their Wrath and Favour, His,—
Lo! in the meditation of His glory,
The SHÁH ² whose subject upon Earth I am,
As he of Heaven's, comes on me unaware,
And suddenly arrests me for his due.
Therefore for one last travel, and as brief
As may become the feeble breath of Age,
My weary pen once more drinks of the well,
Whence, of the Mortal writing, I may read
Anticipation of the Invisible.

*One who travell'd in the Desert
Saw MAJNÚN where he was sitting
All alone like a Magician
Tracing Letters in the Sand.
'Oh distracted Lover! writing
'What the Sword-wind of the Desert
'Undeciphers so that no one
'After you shall understand.'*

¹ Mohammed Saaduddín Káshgharí, spoken of in Notice of Jámí's life, p. 198.

² YAKÚB BEG: to whose protection Jámí owed a Song of gratitude.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

MAJNÚN *answer'd*—‘ *I am writing*
‘ *Only for myself, and only*
‘ “ LAILA,”—*if for ever* “ LAILA ”
‘ *Writing, in that Word a Volume,*
‘ *Over which for ever poring,*
‘ *From her very Name I sip*
‘ *In Fancy, till I drink, her Lip.*’

THE STORY.

PART I.

A SHÁH there was who ruled the realm of Yún¹,
And wore the Ring of Empire of Sikander ;
And in his reign A SAGE, of such report
For Insight reaching quite beyond the Veil,
That Wise men from all quarters of the World,
To catch the jewel falling from his lips
Out of the secret treasure as he went,
Went in a girdle round him. —Which THE SHÁH
Observing, took him to his secrecy ;
Stirr'd not a step, nor set design afoot,
Without the Prophet's sanction ; till, so
counsell'd,
From Káf to Káf² reach'd his Dominion :

¹ Or ‘ YAVAN,’ Son of Japhet, from whom the country was called ‘ YÚNAN ’—IONIA, meant by the Persians to express Greece generally. Sikander is of course, Alexander the Great.

² The Fabulous Mountain supposed by Asiatics to surround the World, binding the Horizon on all sides.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

No People, and no Prince that over them
The ring of Empire wore, but under his
Bow'd down in Battle ; rising then in Peace
Under his Justice grew, secure from wrong,
And in their strength was his Dominion strong.
The SHÁH that has not Wisdom in himself,
Nor has a Wise one for his Counsellor,
The wand of his Authority falls short,
And his Dominion crumbles at the base.
For he, discerning not the characters
Of Tyranny and Justice, confounds both,
Making the World a desert, and Redress
A phantom-water of the Wilderness.

*God said to the Prophet David—
' David, whom I have exalted
' From the sheep to be my People's
 'Shepherd, by your Justice my
 'Revelation justify.
' Lest the misbelieving—yea,
' The Fire-adoring Princes rather
' Be my Prophets, who fulfil,
' Knowing not my WORD, my WILL.'*

ONE night THE SHÁH of Yúnan as he sate
Contemplating his measureless extent
Of Empire, and the glory wherewithal,
As with a garment robed, he ruled alone ;
Then found he nothing wanted to his heart

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

Unless a Son, who, while he lived, might share,
And, after him, his robe of Empire wear.
And then he turn'd him to THE SAGE, and said :
' O Darling of the soul of IFLATÚN¹ ;
' To whom with all his school ARISTO bows ;
' Yea, thou that an ELEVENTH to the TEN
' INTELLIGENCES addest : Thou hast read
' The yet unutter'd secret of my Heart ;
' Answer—Of all that man desires of God
' Is any blessing greater than a Son ?
' Man's prime Desire ; by whom his name and he
' Shall live beyond himself ; by whom his eyes
' Shine living, and his dust with roses blows.
' A Foot for thee to stand on, and an Arm
' To lean by ; sharp in battle as a sword ;
' Salt of the banquet-table ; and a tower
' Of salutary counsel in Diván ;
' One in whose youth a Father shall prolong
' His years, and in his strength continue strong.'

When the shrewd SAGE had heard THE SHÁH'S
discourse

In commendation of a Son, he said :

' Thus much of a *Good* Son, whose wholesome
growth
' Approves the root he grew from. But for one
' Kneaded of *Evil*—well, could one revoke
' His generation, and as early pull
' Him and his vices from the string of Time.

¹ Iflatún, Plato : Aristo, Aristotle : both renowned in the East to this Day. For the Ten Intelligences, see Appendix.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

- ‘ Like Noah’s, puff’d with insolence and pride,
‘ Who, reckless of his Father’s warning call,
‘ Was by the voice of ALLAH from the door
‘ Of refuge in his Father’s Ark debarr’d,
‘ And perish’d in the Deluge.¹ And as none
 Who long for children, may their children
 choose,
‘ Beware of teasing Allah for a Son,
 ‘ Whom having, you may have to pray to lose.’
-

*Sick at heart for want of Children,
Ran before the Saint a Fellow,
Catching at his garment, crying,
 ‘ Master, hear and help me ! Pray
 ‘ That ALLAH from the barren clay
‘ Raise me up a fresh young Cypress,
‘ Who my longing eyes may lighten,
‘ And not let me like a vapour
 ‘ Unremember’d pass away.’
But the Dervish said—‘ Consider ;
 ‘ Wisely let the matter rest
‘ In the hands of ALLAH wholly,
‘ Who, whatever we are after,
 ‘ Understands our business best.’
Still the man persisted—‘ Master,
‘ I shall perish in my longing :
‘ Help, and set my prayer a-going !’
 Then the Dervish raised his hand—
 From the mystic Hunting-land*

¹ See Note in Appendix.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

*Of Darkness to the Father's arms
A musky Fawn of China drew—
A Boy—who, when the shoot of Passion
In his Nature planted grew,
Took to drinking, dicing, drabbing.
From a corner of the house-top
Ill-insulting honest women,
Dagger-drawing on the husband ;
And for many a city-brawl
Still before the Cadi summon'd,
Still the Father pays for all.
Day and night the youngster's doings
Such—the city's talk and scandal ;
Neither counsel, threat, entreaty,
Moved him—till the desperate Father
Once more to the Dervish running,
Catches at his garment—crying—
' Oh my only Hope and Helper !
' One more Prayer ! That God, who laid,
' Would take this trouble from my head !'
But the Saint replied ' Remember
' How that very Day I warn'd you
' Not with blind petition ALLAH
' Trouble to your own confusion ;
' Unto whom remains no more
' To pray for, save that He may pardon
' What so rashly pray'd before.'*

' So much for the result ; and for the means—
' Oh SHÁH, who would not be himself a slave,

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

‘ Which SHÁH least should, and of an appetite
‘ Among the basest of his slaves enslaved—
‘ Better let Azrael find him on his throne
‘ Of Empire sitting childless and alone,
‘ Than his untainted Majesty resign
‘ To that seditious drink, of which one draught
‘ Still for another and another craves,
‘ Till it become a noose to draw the Crown
‘ From off thy brows—about thy lips a ring,
‘ Of which the rope is in a Woman’s hand,
‘ To lead thyself the road of Nothing down.
‘ For what is *She*? A foolish, faithless thing—
‘ A very Káfir in rapacity;
‘ Robe her in all the rainbow-tinted woof
‘ Of Susa, shot with rays of sunny Gold;
‘ Deck her with jewel thick as Night with star;
‘ Pamper her appetite with Hourí fruit
‘ Of Paradise, and fill her jewell’d cup
‘ From the green-mantled Prophet’s Well of
 Life—
‘ One little twist of temper—all your cost
‘ Goes all for nothing: and, as for yourself—
‘ Look! On your bosom she may lie for years;
 ‘ But, get you gone a moment out of sight,
‘ And she forgets you—worse, if, as you turn,
 ‘ Her eyes on any younger Lover light.’

*Once upon the Throne together
Telling one another Secrets,*

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

*Sate SULAYMÁN and BALKÍS ;¹
The Hearts of both were turn'd to Truth,
Unsullied by Deception.*

*First the King of Faith SULAYMÁN
Spoke—‘ However just and wise
‘ Reported, none of all the many
‘ Suitors to my palace thronging
‘ But afar I scrutinize ;
‘ And He who comes not empty-handed
‘ Grows to Honour in mine Eyes.’*

*After this, BALKÍS a Secret
From her hidden bosom utter'd,
Saying—‘ Never night or morning
‘ Comely Youth before me passes
‘ Whom I look not after, longing ’—*

‘ If this, as wise Firdausí says, the curse
‘ Of better women, what then of the worse ? ’

THE SAGE his satire ended ; and THE SHÁH,
Determined on his purpose, but the means
Resigning to Supreme Intelligence,
With Magic-mighty Wisdom his own WILL
Colleagued, and wrought his own accomplish-
ment.

For Lo ! from Darkness came to Light A CHILD,
Of carnal composition unattaint ;
A Perfume from the realm of Wisdom wafted ;

¹ Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, who, it appears, is no worse in one way than Solomon in another, unless in Oriental Eyes.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

A Rosebud blowing on the Royal stem ;
The crowning Jewel of the Crown ; a Star
Under whose augury triumph'd the Throne.
For whom dividing, and again in one
Whole perfect Jewel re-uniting, those
Twin Jewel-words, SALÁMAT and ASMÁN,¹
They hail'd him by the title of SALÁMÁN.
And whereas from no Mother milk he drew,
They chose for him a Nurse—her name ABSÁL—
So young, the opening roses of her breast
But just had budded to an infant's lip ;
So beautiful, as from the silver line
Dividing the musk-harvest of her hair
Down to her foot that trampled crowns of Kings,
A Moon of beauty full ; who thus elect
Should in the garment of her bounty fold
SALÁMÁN of auspicious augury,
Should feed him with the flowing of her breast.
And, once her eyes had open'd upon Him,
They closed to all the world beside, and fed
For ever doating on her Royal jewel
Close in his golden cradle casketed :
Opening and closing which her day's delight,
To gaze upon his heart-inflaming cheek,—
Upon the Babe whom, if she could, she would
Have cradled as the Baby of her eye.²
In rose and musk she wash'd him—to his lip
Press'd the pure sugar from the honeycomb ;

¹ SALÁMAT, Security from Evil ; ASMÁN, Heaven.

² Literally, *Mardumak*—the *Mannikin*, or *Pupil*, of the Eye, corresponding to the Image so frequently used by our old Poets.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

And when, day over, she withdrew her milk,
She made, and having laid him in, his bed,
Burn'd all night like a taper o'er his head.

And still as Morning came, and as he grew,
Finer than any bridal-puppet, which
To prove another's love a woman sends,¹
She trick'd him up—with fresh Collyrium dew
Touch'd his narcissus eyes—the musky locks
Divided from his forehead—and embraced
With gold and ruby girdle his fine waist.

So for seven years she rear'd and tended him :
Nay, when his still-increasing moon of Youth
Into the further Sign of Manhood pass'd,
Pursued him yet, till full fourteen his years,
Fourteen-day full the beauty of his face,
That rode high in a hundred thousand hearts.
For, when SALÁMÁN was but half-lance high,
Lance-like he struck a wound in every one,
And shook down splendour round him like a Sun.

Soon as the Lord of Heav'n had sprung his horse
Over horizon into the blue field,
SALÁMÁN kindled with the wine of sleep,
Mounted a barb of fire for the Maidán ;
He and a troop of Princes—Kings in blood,
Kings in the kingdom-troubling tribe of beauty,
All young in years and courage,² bat in hand

¹ See Appendix.

² The same Persian Word signifying Youth and Courage.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

Gallop'd a-field, toss'd down the golden ball
And chased, so many crescent Moons a full :¹
And, all alike intent upon the Game,
SALÁMÁN still would carry from them all
The prize, and shouting 'Hál !' drive home the
ball.

This done, SALÁMÁN bent him as a bow
To Archery—from Masters of the craft
Call'd for an unstrung bow—himself the cord
Fitted unhelp't,² and nimbly with his hand
Twanging made cry, and drew it to his ear :
Then, fixing the three-feather'd fowl, discharged :
And whether aiming at the fawn a-foot,
Or bird on wing, direct his arrow flew,
Like the true Soul that cannot but go true.

WHEN night came, that releases man from toil,
He play'd the chess of social intercourse ;
Prepared his banquet-hall like Paradise,
Summon'd his Houri-faced musicians,
And, when his brain grew warm with wine, the
veil
Flung off him of reserve : taking a harp,
Between its dry string and his finger quick

¹ See Appendix.

² Bows being so gradually stiffened, according to the age and strength of the Archer, as at last to need five Hundred-weight of pressure to bend, says an old Translation of Chardin, who describes all the process up to bringing up the string to the ear, '*as if to hang it there*' before shooting. Then the first trial was, who could shoot highest : then, the mark, &c.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

Struck fire : or catching up a lute, as if
A child for chastisement, would pinch its ear
To wailing that should agèd eyes make weep.
Now like the Nightingale he sang alone ;
Now with another lip to lip ; and now
Together blending voice and instrument ;
And thus with his associates night he spent.

His Soul rejoiced in knowledge of all kind ;
The fine edge of his Wit would split a hair,
And in the noose of apprehension catch
A meaning ere articulate in word ;
Close as the knitted jewel of Parwín
His jewel Verse he strung ; his Rhetoric
Enlarging like the Mourners of the Bier.¹
And when he took the nimble reed in hand
To run the errand of his Thought along
Its paper field—the character he traced,
Fine on the lip of Youth as the first hair,
Drove Penmen, as that Lovers, to despair.

His Bounty like a Sea was fathomless
That bubbled up with jewel, and flung pearl
Where'er it touch'd, but drew not back again ;
It was a Heav'n that rain'd on all below
Dirhems for drops—

¹ The Pleiades and the Great Bear. This is otherwise prettily applied in the Anvári Soheili—'When one grows poor, his Friends, heretofore compact as THE PLEIADES, disperse wide asunder as THE MOURNERS.'

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

But here that inward Voice
Arrested and rebuked me—‘Foolish Jámí !
‘Wearing that indefatigable pen
‘In celebration of an alien SHÁH
‘Whose Throne, not grounded in the Eternal
World,
‘If YESTERDAY it were, TO-DAY is not,
‘TO-MORROW cannot be.’¹ But I replied ;
‘Oh Fount of Light !—under an alien name
‘I shadow One upon whose head the Crown
‘WAS and yet IS, and SHALL BE ; whose Firmán
‘The Kingdoms Sev’n of this World, and the
Seas,
‘And the Sev’n Heavens, alike are subject to.
‘Good luck to him who under other Name
‘Instructed us that Glory to disguise
‘To which the Initiate scarce dare lift his eyes.’

*Sate a Lover in a garden
All alone, apostrophizing
Many a flower and shrub about him,
And the lights of Heav’n above.
Nightingaling thus, a Noodle
Heard him, and, completely puzzled,
‘What,’ quoth he, ‘and you a Lover,
‘Raving, not about your Mistress,
‘But about the stars and roses—
‘What have these to do with Love ?’*

¹ The Hero of the Story being of YÚNAN—IONIA, or Greece generally (the Persian Geography not being very precise)—and so not of THE FAITH.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

*Answer'd he ; ' Oh thou that aimest
' Wide of Love, and Lovers' language
' Wholly misinterpreting ;
' Sun and Moon are but my Lady's
' Self, as any Lover knows ;
' Hyacinth I said, and meant her
' Hair—her cheek was in the rose—
' And I myself the wretched weed
' That in her cypress shadow grows.'*

AND now the cypress stature of Sáláman
Had reached his top, and now to blossom full
The garden of his Beauty : and Absál,
Fairest of hers, as of his fellows he
The fairest, long'd to gather from the tree.
But, for that flower upon the lofty stem
Of Glory grew to which her hand fell short,
She now with woman's sorcery began
To conjure as she might within her reach.
The darkness of her eyes she darken'd round
With surma, to benight him in mid day,
And over them adorn'd and arch'd the bows¹
To wound him there when lost : her musky locks
Into so many snaky ringlets curl'd,
In which Temptation nestled o'er the cheek
Whose rose she kindled with vermilion dew,
And then one subtle grain of musk laid there,²
The bird of that belovèd heart to snare.

¹ With dark Indigo-Paint, as the Archery Bow with a thin Papyrus-like Bark.

² A Patch, sc.—' *Noir comme le Musc.*' De Sacy.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

Sometimes in passing with a laugh would break
The pearl-enclosing ruby of her lips ;
Or, busied in the room, as by mischance
Would let the lifted sleeve disclose awhile
The vein of silver running up within :
Or, rising as in haste, her golden anklets
Clash, at whose sudden summons to bring down
Under her silver feet the golden Crown.
Thus, by innumerable witcheries,
She went about soliciting his eyes,
Through which she knew the robber unaware
Steals in, and takes the bosom by surprise.

*Burning with her love ZULAIKHÁ
Built a chamber, wall and ceiling
Blank as an untarnisht mirror,
Spotless as the heart of YÚSUF.
Then she made a cunning painter
Multiply her image round it ;
Not an inch of wall or ceiling
But re-echoing her beauty.
Then amid them all in all her
Glory sat she down, and sent for
YÚSUF—she began a tale
Of Love—and lifted up her veil.
Bashfully beneath her burning
Eyes he turn'd away ; but turning
Wheresoever, still about him
Saw ZULAIKHÁ, still ZULAIKHÁ,*

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

*Still, without a veil, ZULAIKHÁ.
But a voice as if from Canaan
Call'd him ; and a Hand from Darkness
Touch'd ; and ere a living Lip
Through the mirage of bewilder'd
Eyes seduced him, he recoil'd,
And let the skirt of danger slip.*

PART II.

ALAS for those who having tasted once
Of that forbidden vintage of the lips
That, press'd and pressing, from each other draw
The draught that so intoxicates them both,
That, while upon the wings of Day and Night
Time rustles on, and Moons do wax and wane,
As from the very Well of Life they drink,
And, drinking, fancy they shall never drain,
But rolling Heaven from his ambush whispers,
' So in my license is it not set down :
' Ah for the sweet societies I make
' At Morning, and before the Nightfall break,
' Ah for the bliss that coming Night fills up,
' And Morn looks in to find an empty Cup !'

*Once in Baghdád a poor Arab,
After weary days of fasting,
Into the Khalífah's banquet-
Chamber, where, aloft in State
HARÚN the Great at supper sate,*

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

*Push'd and pushing, with the throng,
Got before a perfume-breathing
Pasty, like the lip of SHÍRÍN*

*Luscious, or the Poet's song.
Soon as seen, the famisht clown
Seizes up and swallows down.
Then his mouth undaunted wiping—
'Oh Khalífah, hear me swear,
'While I breathe the dust of Baghdád,
'Ne'er at any other Table
'Than at Thine to sup or dine.'
Grimly laugh'd HARÚN, and answer'd ;
 'Fool ! who think'st to arbitrate
 'What is in the hands of Fate—
 'Take, and thrust him from the Gate !'*

WHILE a full Year was counted by the Moon,
SALÁMÁN and ABSÁL rejoiced together,
And neither SHÁH nor SAGE his face beheld.
They question'd those about him, and from them
Heard something : then himself to presence
 summon'd,

And all the truth was told. Then SAGE and
SHÁH

Struck out with hand and foot in his redress.
And first with REASON, which is also best ;
REASON that rights the wanderer ; that completes
The imperfect ; REASON that resolves the knot
Of either world, and sees beyond the Veil.
For REASON is the fountain from of old

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

From which the Prophets drew, and none beside :
Who boasts of other inspiration, lies—
There are no other Prophets than THE WISE.

AND first THE SHÁH:—‘SALÁMÁN, Oh my Soul
‘Light of the eyes of my Prosperity,
‘And making bloom the court of Hope with
 rose ;
‘Year after year, SALÁMÁN, like a bud
‘That cannot blow, my own blood I devour’d,
‘Till, by the seasonable breath of God,
‘At last I blossom’d into thee, my Son ;
‘Oh, do not wound me with a dagger thorn ;
‘Let not the full-blown rose of Royalty
‘Be left to wither in a hand unclean.
‘For what thy proper pastime ? Bat in hand
‘To mount and manage RAKHSH¹ along the
 Field ;
‘Not, with no weapon but a wanton curl
‘Idly reposing on a silver breast.
‘Go, fly thine arrow at the antelope
‘And lion—let me not My lion see
 Slain by the arrow eyes of a ghazál.
Go, challenge ZÁL or RUSTAM to the Field,
‘And smite the warriors’ neck ; not, flying
 them,
‘Beneath a woman’s foot submit thine own.
‘Oh wipe the woman’s henna from thy hand,

¹ ‘Lightning.’ The name of RUSTAM’s famous Horse in the SHÁH-NÁMEH.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

‘ Withdraw thee from the minion¹ who from
thee
‘ Dominion draws, and draws me with thee down ;
‘ Years have I held my head aloft, and all
‘ For Thee—Oh shame if thou prepare my Fall !’

*When before SHIRÚYEH’s dagger
KAI KHUSRAU,² his Father, fell,
He declared this Parable—
‘ Wretch !—There was a branch that waxing
‘ Wanton o’er the root he drank from,
‘ At a draught the living water
‘ Drain’d wherewith himself to crown ;
‘ Died the root—and with him died
‘ The branch—and barren was brought down !’*

THE SHÁH ceased counsel, and THE SAGE began.
‘ Oh last new vintage of the Vine of Life
‘ Planted in Paradise ; Oh Master-stroke,
‘ And all-concluding flourish of the Pen
‘ KUN FA YAKÚN³ ; Thyself prime Archetype,
‘ And ultimate Accomplishment of MAN !

¹ ‘ SHÁH,’ and ‘ SHÁHID’ (A Mistress).

² KHUSRAU PARVÍZ (Chosroe The Victorious), Son of NOSHÍRVÁN The Great ; slain, after Thirty Years of prosperous Reign, by his Son SHÍRÚYEH, who, according to some, was in love with his Father’s mistress SHÍRÍN. See further on one of the most dramatic Tragedies in Persian history.

³ ‘ BE ! AND IT IS’—The famous Word of Creation stolen from Genesis by the Kurán.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

‘The Almighty hand, that out of common earth
‘Thy mortal outward to the perfect form
‘Of Beauty moulded, in the fleeting dust
‘Inscribed HIMSELF, and in thy bosom set
‘A mirror to reflect HIMSELF in Thee.
‘Let not that dust by rebel passion blown
‘Obliterate that character : nor let
‘That Mirror, sullied by the breath impure,
‘Or form of carnal beauty fore-possess,
‘Be made incapable of the Divine.
‘Supreme is thine Original degree,
‘Thy Star upon the top of Heaven ; but Lust
‘Will bring it down, down even to the Dust !’

*Quoth a Muezzín to the crested
Cock—‘Oh Prophet of the Morning,
‘Never Prophet like to you
‘Prophesied of Dawn, nor Muezzín
‘With so shrill a voice of warning
‘Woke the sleeper to confession
‘Crying, “LÁ ALLAH ILLÁ ’LLAH,
‘MUHAMMAD RASÚLUHU.¹”*
*‘One, methinks, so rarely gifted
‘Should have prophesied and sung
‘In Heav’n, the Birds of Heav’n among,
‘Not with these poor hens about him,
‘Raking in a heap of dung.’
‘And,’ replied the Cock, ‘in Heaven
‘Once I was ; but by my foolish*

¹ There is no God but God ; Muhammad is his Prophet.’

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

*'Lust to this uncleanly living
'With my sorry mates about me
 'Thus am fallen. Otherwise,
'I were prophesying Dawn
 'Before the gates of Paradise.'*¹

OF all the Lover's sorrows, next to that
Of Love by Love forbidden, is the voice
Of Friendship turning harsh in Love's reproof,
And overmuch of Counsel—whereby Love
Grows stubborn, and recoiling unsuppress'd
Within, devours the heart within the breast.

SALÁMÁN heard ; his Soul came to his lips ;
Reproaches struck not ABSÁL out of him,
But drove Confusion in ; bitter became
The drinking of the sweet draught of Delight,
And waned the splendour of his Moon of
 Beauty.

His breath was Indignation, and his heart
Bled from the arrow, and his anguish grew.
How bear it ?—By the hand of Hatred dealt,
Easy to meet—and deal with, blow for blow ;
But from Love's hand which one must not re-
 quite,
And cannot yield to—what resource but Flight ?

¹ Jámí, as, may be, other Saintly Doctors, kept soberly to one Wife. But wherefore, under the Law of Muhammad, should the Cock be selected (as I suppose he is) for a '*Caution*,' because of his indulgence in Polygamy, however unusual among Birds ?

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

Resolved on which, he victuall'd and equipp'd
A Camel, and one night he led it forth,
And mounted—he with ABSÁL at his side,
Like sweet twin almonds in a single shell.
And Love least murmurs at the narrow space
That draws him close and closer in embrace.

*When the Moon of Canaan YÚSUF
In the prison of Egypt darken'd,
Nightly from her spacious Palace-
Chamber, and its rich array,
Stole ZULAIKHÁ like a fantom
To the dark and narrow dungeon
Where her buried Treasure lay.
Then to those about her wond'ring—
'Were my Palace,' she replied,
'Wider than Horizon-wide,
'It were narrower than an Ant's eye,
'Were my Treasure not inside :
'And an Ant's eye, if but there
'My Lover, Heaven's horizon were.'*

SIX days SALÁMÁN on the Camel rode,
And then the hissing arrows of reproof
Were fallen far behind ; and on the Seventh
He halted on the Seashore ; on the shore
Of a great Sea that reaching like a floor
Of rolling Firmament below the Sky's

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

From KÁF to KÁF, to GAU¹ and MÁHÍ¹ down
Descended, and its Stars were living eyes.
The Face of it was as it were a range
Of moving Mountains ; or a countless host
Of Camels trooping tumultuously up,
Host over host, and foaming at the lip.
Within, innumerable glittering things
Sharp as cut Jewels, to the sharpest eye
Scarce visible, hither and hither slipping,
As silver scissors slice a blue brocade ;
But should the Dragon coil'd in the abyss²
Emerge to light, his starry counter-sign
Would shrink into the depth of Heav'n aghast.

SALÁMÁN eyed the moving wilderness
On which he thought, once launcht, no foot,
 nor eye
Should ever follow ; forthwith he devised
Of sundry scented woods along the shore
A little shallop like a Quarter-moon,
Wherein Absál and He like Sun and Moon
Enter'd as into some Celestial Sign ;

¹ Bull and Fish—the lowest Substantial Base of Earth. ‘He first made the Mountains ; then cleared the Face of the Earth from Sea ; then fixed it fast on Gau ; Gau on Máhí ; and Máhí on Air ; and Air on what ? on NOTHING ; Nothing on Nothing, all is Nothing—Enough.’ Attár ; quoted in De Sacy’s *Pendnamah*, xxxv.

² The Sidereal Dragon, whose Head, according to the Pauránic (or poetic) astronomers of the East, devoured the Sun and Moon in Eclipse. ‘But *we* know,’ said Rámachandra to Sir W. Jones, ‘that the supposed Head and Tail of the Dragon mean only the *Nodes*, or points formed by intersections of the Ecliptic and the Moon’s Orbit.’—Sir W. Jones’ *Works*, Vol. iv., p. 74.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

That, figured like a bow, but arrow-like
In flight, was feather'd with a little sail,
And, pitcht upon the water like a duck,
So with her bosom sped to her Desire.

When they had sail'd their vessel for a Moon,
And marr'd their beauty with the wind o' the
Sea,

Suddenly in mid sea reveal'd itself
An Isle, beyond imagination fair ;
An Isle that all was Garden ; not a Flower,
Nor Bird of plumage like the flower, but there ;
Some like the Flower, and others like the Leaf ;
Some, as the Pheasant and the Dove adorn'd
With crown and collar, over whom, alone,
The jewell'd Peacock like a Sultan shone ;
While the Musicians, and among them Chief
The Nightingale, sang hidden in the trees
Which, arm in arm, from fingers quivering
With any breath of air, fruit of all kind
Down scatter'd in profusion to their feet,
Where fountains of sweet water ran between,
And Sun and shadow chequer-chased the green.
Here Iram-garden seem'd in secresy
Blowing the rosebud of its Revelation ;¹
Or Paradise, forgetful of the dawn
Of Audit, lifted from her face the veil.

SALÁMÁN saw the Isle, and thought no more
Of Further—there with ABSÁL he sate down,

¹ Note in Appendix.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

ABSÁL and He together side by side
Together like the Lily and the Rose,
Together like the Soul and Body, one.
Under its trees in one another's arms
They slept—they drank its fountains hand in
hand—

Paraded with the Peacock—raced the Partridge—
Chased the green Parrot for his stolen fruit,
Or sang divisions with the Nightingale.
There was the Rose without a thorn, and there
The Treasure and no Serpent¹ to beware—
Oh think of such a Mistress at your side
In such a Solitude, and none to chide !

*Said to WÁMIK one who never
Knew the Lover's passion—' Why
' Solitary thus and silent '
' Solitary places haunting,
' Like a Dreamer, like a Spectre,
' Like a thing about to die ? '
WÁMIK answer'd—' Meditating
' Flight with Azrá² to the Desert :
' There by so remote a Fountain
' That, whichever way one travell'd,
' League on league, one yet should never
' See the face of Man ; for ever
' There to gaze on my Belovèd ;
' Gaze, till Gazing out of Gazing*

¹ The supposed guardian of buried treasure.

² Wámik and Azrá (Virgin) two typical Lovers.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

*' Grew to Being Her I gaze on,
' SHE and I no more, but in One
' Undivided Being blended.
' All that is by Nature twain
' Fears, or suffers by, the pain
' Of Separation : Love is only
 ' Perfect when itself transcends
' Itself, and, one with that it loves,
 ' In undivided Being blends.'*

WHEN by and by the SHÁH was made aware
Of that heart-breaking Flight, his royal robe
He changed for ashes, and his Throne for dust,
And wept awhile in darkness and alone.
Then rose ; and, taking counsel from the SAGE,
Pursuit set everywhere afoot : but none
Could trace the footstep of the flying Deer.
Then from his secret Art the Sage-Vizyr
A Magic Mirror made ; a Mirror like
The bosom of All-wise Intelligence
Reflecting in its mystic compass all
Within the sev'n-fold volume of the World
Involved ; and, looking in that Mirror's face,
The SHÁH beheld the face of his Desire.
Beheld those Lovers, like that earliest pair
Of Lovers, in this other Paradise
So far from human eyes in the mid sea,
And yet within the magic glass so near
As with a finger one might touch them, isled.
THE SHÁH beheld them ; and compassion touch'd

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

His eyes and anger died upon his lips ;
And arm'd with Righteous Judgment as he was,
Yet, seeing those two Lovers with one lip
Drinking that cup of Happiness and Tears ¹
In which Farewell had never yet been flung,²
He paused for their repentance to recall
The lifted arm that was to shatter all.

The Lords of Wrath have perish'd by the blow
Themselves had aim'd at others long ago.
Draw not in haste the sword, which Fate, may be,
Will sheathe, hereafter to be drawn on Thee.

*FARHÁD, who the shapeless mountain
Into human likeness moulded,
Under SHÍRÍN's eyes as slavish
Potters' earth himself became.*

*Then the secret fire of jealous
Frenzy, catching and devouring
KAI KHUSRAU, broke into flame.*

*With that ancient Hag of Darkness
Plotting, at the midnight Banquet
FARHÁD's golden cup he poison'd,
And in SHÍRÍN's eyes alone*

¹ Κρατῆρα μακρὸν ἡδονῆς καὶ δακρύων
Κιρνῶντες ἐξέπινον ἄχρις ἐς μέθην.

(From Theodorus Prodromus, as quoted by Sir W. Jones.)

² A pebble flung into a Cup being a signal for a company to break up.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

*Reign'd—But Fate that Fate revenges,
Arms SHÍRÚYEH with the dagger
That at once from SHÍRÍN tore,
And hurl'd him lifeless from his throne.¹*

But as the days went on, and still THE SHÁH
Beheld his Son how in the Woman lost,
And still the Crown that should adorn his head,
And still the Throne that waited for his foot,
Both trampled under by a base desire,
Of which the Soul was still unsatisfied—
Then from the sorrow of THE SHÁH fell Fire ;
To Gracelessness ungracious he became,
And, quite to shatter that rebellious lust,
Upon SALÁMÁN all his WILL, with all ²
His SAGE-VIZYR'S Might-magic arm'd, dis-
charged.

And Lo ! SALÁMÁN to his Mistress turn'd,
But could not reach her—look'd and look'd again,
And palpitated tow'rd her—but in vain !
Oh Misery ! As to the Bankrupt's eyes
The Gold he may not finger ! or the Well

¹ One story is that Khusrau had promised that if Farhád cut through a Mountain, and brought a Stream through, Shírín should be his. Farhád was on the point of achieving his work, when Khusrau sent an old Woman (here, perhaps, purposely confounded with Fate) to tell him Shírín was dead ; whereon Farhád threw himself headlong from the Rock. The Sculpture at Beysitún (or Besitún), where Rawlinson has deciphered Darius and Xerxes, was traditionally called Farhád's.

² He Mesmerizes him !—See also further on this Power of the WILL.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

To him who sees a-thirst, and cannot reach,
Or Heav'n above reveal'd to those in Hell !
Yet when SALÁMÁN's anguish was extreme,
The door of Mercy open'd, and he saw
That Arm he knew to be his Father's reacht
To lift him from the pit in which he lay :
Timidly tow'rd his Father's eyes his own
He lifted, pardon-pleading, crime-confest,
And drew once more to that forsaken Throne,
As the stray bird one day will find her nest.

*One was asking of a Teacher,
' How a Father his reputed
 ' Son for his should recognize ? '
Said the Master, ' By the stripling,
' As he grows to manhood, growing
' Like to his reputed Father,
 ' Good or Evil, Fool or Wise.*

*' Lo the disregarded Darnel
' With itself adorns the Wheat-field,
' And for all the vernal season
 ' Satisfies the farmer's eye ;
' But the hour of harvest coming,
 ' And the thrasher by and by,
' Then a barren ear shall answer,
 ' " Darnel, and no Wheat, am I." '*

Yet Ah for that poor Lover ! ' Next the curse
' Of Love by Love forbidden, nothing worse

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

‘Than Friendship turn’d in Love’s reproof unkind,

‘And Love from Love divorcing’—Thus I said :

Alas, a worse, and worse, is yet behind—

Love’s back-blow of Revenge for having fled !

SALÁMÁN bow’d his forehead to the dust
Before his Father ; to his Father’s hand
Fast—but yet fast, and faster, to his own
Clung one, who by no tempest of reproof
Or wrath might be dissever’d from the stem
She grew to : till, between Remorse and Love,
He came to loathe his Life and long for Death.
And, as from him *She* would not be divorced,
With Her he fled again : he fled—but now
To no such Island centred in the sea
As lull’d them into Paradise before ;
But to the Solitude of Desolation,
The Wilderness of Death. And as before
Of sundry scented woods along the shore
A shallop he devised to carry them
Over the waters whither foot nor eye
Should ever follow them, he thought—so now
Of sere wood strewn about the plain of Death,
A raft to bear them through the wave of Fire
Into Annihilation, he devised,
Gather’d, and built ; and, firing with a Torch,
Into the central flame ABSÁL and He
Sprung hand in hand exulting. But the SAGE
In secret all had order’d ; and the Flame,

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

Directed by his self-fulfilling WILL,
Devouring Her to ashes, left untouch'd
SALÁMÁN—all the baser metal burn'd,
And to itself the authentic Gold return'd.

PART III.

FROM the Beginning such has been the Fate
Of Man, whose very clay was soak'd in tears.
For when at first of common Earth they took,
And moulded to the stature of the Soul,
For Forty days, full Forty days, the cloud
Of Heav'n wept over him from head to foot :
And when the Forty days had passed to Night,
The Sunshine of one solitary day
Look'd out of Heav'n to dry the weeping clay.¹
And though that sunshine in the long arrear
Of darkness on the breathless image rose,
Yet, with the Living, every wise man
knows
Such consummation scarcely shall be here !

SALÁMÁN fired the pile ; and in the flame
That, passing him, consumed ABSÁL like straw,
Died his Divided Self, his Individual
Survived, and, like a living Soul from which
The Body falls, strange, naked, and alone.

¹ Some such Legend is quoted by De Sacy and D'Herbelot from some Commentaries on the Kurán.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

Then rose his cry to Heaven—his eyelashes
Wept blood—his sighs stood like a smoke in
Heaven,
And Morning rent her garment at his anguish.
And when Night came, that drew the pen across
The written woes of Day for all but him,
Crouch'd in a lonely corner of the house,
He seem'd to feel about him in the dark
For one who was not, and whom no fond word
Could summon from the Void in which she lay.

And so the Wise One found him where he sate
Bow'd down alone in darkness ; and once more
Made the long-silent voice of Reason sound
In the deserted Palace of his Soul ;
Until SALÁMÁN lifted up his head
To bow beneath the Master ; sweet it seem'd,
Sweeping the chaff and litter from his own,
To be the very dust of Wisdom's door,
Slave of the Firmán of the Lord of Life,
Who pour'd the wine of Wisdom in his cup,
Who laid the dew of Peace upon his lips ;
Yea, wrought by Miracle in his behalf.
For when old Love return'd to Memory,
And broke in passion from his lips, THE SAGE,
Under whose waxing WILL Existence rose
From Nothing, and, relaxing, waned again,
Raising a Fantom Image of ABSÁL,
Set it awhile before SALÁMÁN's eyes,
Till, having sow'd the seed of comfort there,
It went again down to Annihilation.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

But ever, as the Fantom past away,
THE SAGE would tell of a Celestial Love ;
‘ZUHRAH,¹’ he said, ‘ZUHRAH, compared with
whom
‘That brightest star that bears her name in
Heav’n
‘Was but a winking taper ; and Absál,
‘Queen-star of Beauties in this world below,
‘But her distorted image in the stream
‘Of fleeting Matter ; and all Eloquence,
‘And Soul-enchaining harmonies of Song,
‘A far-off echo of that Harp in Heav’n
‘Which Dervish-dances to her harmony.’

SALÁMÁN listen’d, and inclined—again
Entreated, inclination ever grew ;
Until THE SAGE beholding in his Soul
The SPIRIT² quicken, so effectually
With ZUHRAH wrought, that she reveal’d herself
In her pure lustre to SALÁMÁN’s Soul,
And blotting ABSÁL’s Image from his breast
There reign’d instead. Celestial Beauty seen,
He left the Earthly ; and, once come to know
Eternal Love, the Mortal he let go.

THE Crown of Empire how supreme a lot !
The Sultan’s Throne how lofty ! Yea, but not

¹ ‘ZUHRAH.’ The Planetary and Celestial Venus.

² ‘Maanf.’ The Mystical pass-word of the Súfís, to express the
transcendental New Birth of the Soul.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

For All—None but the Heaven-ward foot may
dare
To mount—The head that touches Heaven to
wear !—

When the Beloved of Royal augury
Was rescued from the bondage of ABSÁL,
Then he arose, and shaking off the dust
Of that lost travel, girded up his heart,
And look'd with undefilèd robe to Heaven.
Then was his Head worthy to wear the Crown,
His Foot to mount the Throne. And then THE
SHÁH

From all the quarters of the World-wide realm
Summon'd all those who under Him the ring
Of Empire wore, King, Counsellor, Amír ;
Of whom not one but to SALÁMÁN did
Obeisance, and lifted up his neck
To yoke it under His supremacy.
Then THE SHÁH crown'd him with the Golden
Crown,
And set the Golden Throne beneath his feet,
And over all the heads of the Assembly,
And in the ears of all, his Jewel-word
With the Diamond of Wisdom cut, and said :—

' My Son,¹ the Kingdom of the World is not
' Eternal, nor the sum of right desire ;

¹ One sees Jámí taking advantage of his Allegorical Sháh to read a lesson to the Living,—whose ears Advice, unlike Praise, scarce ever reached, unless obliquely and by Fable. The Warning (and doubtless with good reason) is principally aimed at the Minister.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

‘ Make thou the Law reveal’d of God thy Law,
‘ The voice of Intellect Divine within
‘ Interpreter ; and considering TO-DAY
‘ TO-MORROW’S Seed-field, ere That come to bear,
‘ Sow with the harvest of Eternity.
‘ And, as all Work, and, most of all, the Work
‘ That Kings are born to, wisely should be
 wrought,
‘ Where doubtful of thine own sufficiency,
‘ Ever, as I have done, consult the Wise.
‘ Turn not thy face away from the Old ways,
‘ That were the canon of the Kings of Old ;
‘ Nor cloud with Tyranny the glass of Justice :
‘ By Mercy rather to right Order turn
‘ Confusion, and Disloyalty to Love.
‘ In thy provision for the Realm’s estate,
‘ And for the Honour that becomes a King,
‘ Drain not thy People’s purse—the Tyranny
‘ Which thee enriches at thy Subject’s cost,
‘ Awhile shall make thee strong ; but in the end
‘ Shall bow thy neck beneath thy People’s hate,
‘ And lead thee with the Robber down to Hell.
‘ Thou art a Shepherd, and thy Flock the People,
‘ To help and save, not ravage and destroy ;
‘ For which is for the other, Flock or Shepherd ?
‘ And join with thee True men to keep the
 Flock—
‘ Dogs, if you will—but trusty—head in leash,
‘ Whose teeth are for the Wolf, not for the Lamb,
‘ And least of all the Wolf’s accomplices.
‘ For Sháhs must have Vizyrs—but be they Wise

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

‘ And Trusty—knowing well the Realm’s estate—
‘ Knowing how far to Sháh and Subject bound
‘ On either hand—not by extortion, nor
‘ By usury wrung from the People’s purse,
‘ Feeding their Master, and themselves (with
 whom
‘ Enough is apt enough to make rebel)
‘ To such a surfeit feeding as feeds Hell.
‘ Proper in soul and body be they—pitiful
‘ To Poverty—hospitable to the Saint—
‘ Their sweet Access a salve to wounded Hearts ;
‘ Their Wrath a sword against Iniquity,
‘ But at thy bidding only to be drawn ;
‘ Whose Ministers they are, to bring thee in
‘ Report of Good or Evil through the Realm :
 ‘ Which to confirm with thine immediate Eye,
‘ And least of all, remember—least of all,
‘ Suffering Accuser also to be Judge,
 ‘ By surest steps up-builds Prosperity.’

MEANING OF THE STORY.

UNDER the leaf of many a Fable lies
The Truth for those who look for it ; of this
If thou wouldst look behind and find the Fruit,
(To which the Wiser hand hath found his way)
Have thy desire—No Tale of ME and THEE,
Though I and THOU be its Interpreters.¹

¹ The Story is of *Generals*, though enacted by *Particulars*.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

What signifies THE SHÁH ? and what THE SAGE ?
And what SALÁMÁN not of Woman born ?
Who was ABSÁL who drew him to Desire ?
And what the KINGDOM that awaited him
When he had drawn his Garment from her hand ?
What means THAT SEA ? And what that FIERY
PILE ?

And what that Heavenly ZUHRAH who at last
Clear'd ABSÁL from the Mirror of his Soul ?
Listen to me, and you shall understand
The Word that Lover wrote along the sand.¹

THE Incomparable Creator, when this World
He did create, created first of all
The FIRST INTELLIGENCE²—First of a Chain

¹ See p. 211.

² 'These Ten Intelligences are only another Form of the Gnostic Daemones. The Gnostics held that Matter and Spirit could have no Intercourse—they were, as it were, *incommensurate*. How then, granting this premise, was Creation possible ? Their answer was a kind of gradual Elimination. God, the "Actus Purus," created an Aeon ; this Aeon created a Second ; and so on, until the Tenth Aeon was sufficiently Material (as the Ten were in a continually descending Series) to affect Matter, and so cause the Creation by giving to Matter the Spiritual *Form*.

Similarly we have in Suffism these Ten Intelligences in a corresponding Series, and for the same End.

There are Ten Intelligences, and Nine Heavenly Spheres, of which the Ninth is the Uppermost Heaven, appropriated to the First Intelligence ; the Eighth, that of the Zodiac, to the Second ; the Seventh, Saturn, to the Third ; the Sixth, Jupiter, to the Fourth ; the Fifth, Mars, to the Fifth ; the Fourth, The Sun, to the Sixth ; the Third, Venus, to the Seventh ; the Second, Mercury, to the Eighth ; the First, The Moon, to the Ninth ; and THE EARTH is the peculiar Sphere of the Tenth, or lowest Intelligence, called THE ACTIVE.'—E. B. C.—v. Appendix.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

Of Ten Intelligences, of which the Last
Sole Agent is in this our Universe,
ACTIVE INTELLIGENCE so call'd ; The One
Distributor of Evil and of Good,
Of Joy and Sorrow. Himself apart from MATTER,
In Essence and in Energy—He yet
Hath fashion'd all that is—Material Form,
And Spiritual, all from HIM—by HIM
Directed all, and in his Bounty drown'd.
Therefore is He that Firmán-issuing SHÁH
To whom the World was subject. But because
What He distributes to the Universe
Another and a Higher Power supplies,
Therefore all those who comprehend aright,
That Higher in THE SAGE will recognise.

HIS the PRIME SPIRIT that, spontaneously
Projected by the TENTH INTELLIGENCE,
Was from no womb of MATTER reproduced
A special Essence called THE SOUL OF MAN ;
A Child of Heaven, in raiment unbeshamed
Of Sensual taint, and so SALÁMÁN named.

And who ABSÁL ?—The Sense-adoring Body,
Slave to the Blood and Sense—through whom
THE SOUL,
Although the Body's very Life it be,
Doth yet imbibe the knowledge and delight
Of things of SENSE ; and these in such a bond
United as GOD only can divide,
As Lovers in this Tale are signified.

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

And what the Flood on which they sail'd, with those
Fantastic creatures peopled; and that Isle
In which their Paradise awhile they made,
And thought, for ever?—That false Paradise
Amid the fluctuating Waters found
Of Sensual passion, in whose bosom lies
A world of Being from the light of God
Deep as in unsubiding Deluge drown'd.

And why was it that ABSÁL in that Isle
So soon deceived in her Delight, and He
Fell short of his Desire?—that was to show
How soon the Senses of their Passion tire,
And in a surfeit of themselves expire.

And what the turning of SALÁMÁN's Heart
Back to THE SHAH, and to the throne of Might
And Glory yearning?—What but the return
Of the lost SOUL to his true Parentage,
And back from Carnal error looking up
Repentant to his Intellectual Right.

And when the Man between his living Shame
Distracted, and the Love that would not die,
Fled once again—what meant that second Flight
Into the Desert, and that Pile of Fire
On which he fain his Passion with Himself
Would immolate?—That was the Discipline
To which the living Man himself devotes,
Till all the Sensual dross be scorcht away,
And, to its pure integrity return'd,

SALÁMÁN AND ABSÁL

His Soul alone survives. But forasmuch
As from a darling Passion so divorced
The wound will open and will bleed anew,
Therefore THE SAGE would ever and anon
Raise up and set before Salámán's eyes
That Fantom of the past ; but evermore
Revealing one Diviner, till his Soul
She fill'd, and blotted out the Mortal Love.
For what is ZUHRAH ?—What but that Divine
Original, of which the Soul of Man
Darkly possesst, by that fierce Discipline
At last he disengages from the Dust,
And flinging off the baser rags of Sense,
And all in Intellectual Light array'd,
As Conqueror and King he mounts the Throne,
And wears the Crown of Human Glory—Whence,
Throne over Throne surmounting, he shall reign
One with the LAST and FIRST INTELLIGENCE.

This is the meaning of this Mystery,
Which to know wholly ponder in thy Heart,
Till all its ancient Secret be enlarged.
Enough—The written Summary I close,
And set my Seal—



APPENDIX

*'To thy Harím Dividuality
'No entrance finds,' &c. (p. 208)*

This Sufi Identification with Deity (further illustrated in the Story of Salámán's first flight) is shadowed in a Parable of Jeláluddín, of which here is an outline. 'One knocked at the Beloved's Door; and a Voice asked from within, 'Who is there?' and he answered, 'It is I.' Then the Voice said, 'This House will not hold Me and Thee.' And the Door was not opened. Then went the Lover into the Desert, and fasted and prayed in Solitude. And after a year he returned, and knocked again at the Door. And again the Voice asked, 'Who is there?' and he said, 'It is Thyself!'—and the Door was opened to him.'

*O Darling of the soul of Iflatún
To whom with all his school Aristo bows. (p. 214)*

Some Traveller in the East—Professor Eastwick, I think—tells us that in endeavouring to explain to an Eastern Cook the nature of an *Irish Stew*, the man said he knew well enough about '*Aristo*.' '*Iflatún*,' might almost as well have been taken for '*Vol-au-vent*.'

'Like Noah's, puff'd with Insolence and Pride,' &c. (p. 215)

In the Kurán God engages to save Noah and his Family,—meaning all who believed in the Warning. One of Noah's Sons (Canaan or Ham, some think) would not believe. "And the Ark swam with them between waves like Mountains: and Noah called

APPENDIX

up to his Son, who was separated from him, saying, 'Embark with us, my Son, and stay not with the Unbelievers.' He answered, 'I will get on a Mountain, which will secure me from the Water.' Noah replied, 'There is no security this Day from the Decree of God, except for him on whom he shall have Mercy.' And a Wave passed between them, and he became one of those who were drowned. And it was said, 'O Earth, swallow up thy waters; and Thou, O Heaven, withhold thy Rain!' And immediately the Water abated, and the Decree was fulfilled, and the Ark rested on the Mountain Al Judi; and it was said, 'Away with the ungodly People!' And Noah called upon his Lord, and said, 'O Lord, verily my Son is of my Family; and thy Promise is True: for Thou art the most just of those who exercise Judgment.' God answered, 'O Noah, verily he is not of thy Family: this intercession of thine for him, is not a righteous work.'—*Salé's Kurán*, vol. ii. p. 21.

'*Finer than any bridal-puppet, which
To prove another's love a woman sends,*' &c. (p. 220)

In Atkinson's version of the 'Kitábi Kulsúm Naneh' [c. xii.] we find among other Ceremonials and Proprieties of which the Book treats, that when a Woman wished to ascertain another's Love, she sent a Doll on a Tray with flowers and sweetmeats, and judged how far her affection was reciprocated by the Doll's being returned to her drest in a Robe of Honour, or in Black. The same Book also tells of *two* Dolls—Bride and Bridegroom, I suppose—being used on such occasions; the test of Affection being whether the one sent were returned with or without its Fellow.

'*The Royal Game of Chógán.*' (p. 221)

For centuries the Royal Game of Persia, and adopted (Ouseley thinks) under varying modifications of name and practice by other nations, was played by Horsemen, who, suitably habited, and armed with semicircular-headed Bats or Sticks, strove to drive a Ball through a Goal of upright Pillars. (See Frontispiece.) We may call it 'Horse-hockey,' as heretofore played by young Englishmen in the Maidán of Calcutta, and other Indian cities, I believe, and now in England itself under the name of Polo.

APPENDIX

The Frontispiece to this version of the Poem is accurately copied from an Engraving in Sir William's Book, which he says (and those who care to look into the Bodleian¹ for it may see) 'is accurately copied from a very beautiful Persian MS., containing the Works of Háfiz, transcribed in the year 956 of the Hijrah, 1549 of Christ; the MS. is in my own Collection. This Delineation exhibits two Horsemen contending for the Ball; their short Jackets seem peculiarly adapted to this Sport; we see the MÍL, or Goals; Servants attend on Foot, holding CHÚGÁNS in readiness for other Persons who may join in the Amusement, or to supply the place of any that may be broken. A young Prince (as his PARR, or Feather, would indicate) receives on his Entrance into the MEIDÁN, or Place of Exercise, a CHÚGÁN from the hands of a bearded Man, very plainly dressed; yet, as an intelligent Painter at Isfahán assured me (and as appears from other Miniatures in the same Book), this Bearded Figure is designed to represent Háfiz himself,' etc.

The Persian legend at the Top Corner is the Verse from Háfiz which the Drawing illustrates :

Shahsuvára khúsh bemeidán ámedy gúy bezann.

THE MUEZZÍN'S CRY. (p. 230)

I am informed by a distinguished Arabic Scholar that the proper Cry of the Muezzin is, with some slight local variations, such as he heard it at Cairo and Damascus :

Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar ;
Allah Akbar, Allah Akbar ;
Ishhad lá allah illá 'llah ;
Ishhad lá allah illá 'llah ;
Ishhad lá allah illá 'llah ;
Ishhad Muhammad rasúluhu ;
Ishhad Muhammad rasúluhu ;
Ishhad Muhammad rasúluhu ;
Hayá 'ala 's-salát, Hayá 'alá 's-salát,
Inna 's-salát khair min an-naum.

¹ MS. Ouseley 20, vol. 163.

APPENDIX

‘God is great’ (*four times*); ‘Confess that there is no God but God,’ (*three times*); ‘Confess that Muhammad is the prophet of God,’ (*three times*); ‘Come to Prayer, Come to Prayer, for Prayer is better than Sleep.’

[A more accurate account will be found in Lane’s *Modern Egyptians*.]

THE GARDEN OF IRAM (p. 234.)

*‘Here Iram-garden seem’d in secresy
‘Blowing the rosebud of its Revelation;’*

‘Mahomet,’ says Sir W. Jones, ‘in the Chapter of The Morning, towards the end of his Alcoran, mentions a Garden called ‘Irem,’ which is no less celebrated by the Asiatic Poets than that of the Hesperides by the Greeks. It was planted, as the Commentators say, by a king named Shedád,’—deep in the Sands of Arabia Felix—‘and was once seen by an Arabian who wandered far into the Desert in search of a lost Camel.’

THE TEN INTELLIGENCES. (p. 247.)

A curious parallel to this doctrine is quoted by Mr. Morley (*Critical Miscellanies*, Series II. p. 318), from so anti-gnostic a Doctor as Paley, in Ch. III. of his *Natural Theology*.

‘As we have said, therefore, God prescribes limits to his power, that he may let in the exercise, and thereby exhibit demonstrations, of his wisdom. For then—*i.e.*, such laws and limitations being laid down, it is as though one Being should have fixed certain rules; and, if we may so speak, provided certain materials; and, afterwards, have committed to another Being, out of these materials, and in subordination to these rules, the task of drawing forth a Creation; a supposition which evidently leaves room, and induces indeed a necessity, for contrivance. Nay, there may be many such Agents, and many ranks of these. We do not advance this as a doctrine either of philosophy or religion; but we say that the subject may be safely represented under this view; because the Deity, acting himself by general laws, will have the same consequence upon our reasoning, as if he had prescribed these laws to another.’

A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW
OF
FARÍD-UDDÍN ATTAR'S
BIRD-PARLIAMENT

I am indebted to the kindness of Professor Cowell for the following account of this translation. W. A. W.

FitzGerald was first interested in Aṭṭar's *Mantik-ut-tair* by the extracts given in De Sacy's notes to his edition of that poet's *Pand-nâmah*, and in 1856 he began to read the original in a MS. lent to him by Mr. Newton of Hertford. In 1857 Garcin de Tassy published his edition of the Persian text, of which he had previously given an analysis in his "*La poésie philosophique et religieuse chez les Persans*"; and FitzGerald at once threw himself into the study of it with all his characteristic enthusiasm. De Tassy subsequently published in 1863 a French prose translation of the poem; but the previous analysis was, I believe, FitzGerald's only help in mastering the difficulties of the original. He often wrote to me in India, describing the pleasure he found in his new discovery, and he used to mention how the more striking apologues were gradually shaping themselves into verse, as he thought them over in his lonely walks. At last, in 1862, he sent me the following translation, intending at first to offer it for publication in the *Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society*; but he soon felt that it was too free a version for the pages of a scientific journal. He then talked of publishing it by itself, but the project never assumed a definite shape, though I often urged him to print the '*Bird-Parliament*' as a sequel to the '*Salâmân*.'

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

ONCE on a time from all the Circles seven
Between the stedfast Earth and rolling Heaven
THE BIRDS, of all Note, Plumage, and Degree,
That float in Air, and roost upon the Tree ;
And they that from the Waters snatch their Meat,
And they that scour the Desert with long Feet :
Birds of all Natures, known or not to Man,
Flock'd from all Quarters into full Divan,
On no less solemn business than to find
Or choose, a Sultán Khalif of their kind, }
For whom, if never their's, or lost, they pined. }
The Snake had his, 'twas said ; and so the Beast
His Lion-lord : and Man had his, at least :
And that the Birds, who nearest were the Skies,
And went apparell'd in its Angel Dyes,
Should be without—under no better Law
Than that which lost all other in the Maw—
Disperst without a Bond of Union—nay,
Or meeting to make each the other's Prey—
This was the Grievance—this the solemn Thing
On which the scatter'd Commonwealth of Wing,

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

From all the four Winds, flying like to Cloud
That met and blacken'd Heav'n, and Thunder-
loud
With Sound of whirring Wings and Beaks that
clash'd
Down like a Torrent on the Desert dash'd :
Till by Degrees, the Hubbub and Pell-mell
Into some Order and Precedence fell,
And, Proclamation made of Silence, each
In special Accent, but in general Speech
That all should understand, as seem'd him best,
The Congregation of all Wings address.

And first, with Heart so full as from his Eyes
Ran weeping, up rose Tájidár¹ the Wise ;
The mystic Mark upon whose Bosom show'd
That he alone of all the Birds THE ROAD
Had travell'd : and the Crown upon his Head
Had reach'd the Goal ; and He stood forth and
said.

' Oh Birds, by what Authority divine
I speak you know by *His* authentic Sign,
And Name, emblazon'd on my Breast and Bill :
Whose Counsel I assist at, and fulfil :
At His Behest I measured as he plann'd
The Spaces of the Air and Sea and Land ;

¹ *Tájidár*—'Crown-wearer'—one Epithet of the '*Hudhud*,' a beautiful kind of Lapwing, Niebuhr says, frequenting the Shores of the Persian Gulf, and supposed to have the Gift of Speech, etc.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

I gauged the secret sources of the Springs
 From Cloud to Fish¹ : the Shadow of my Wings
 Dream'd over sleeping Deluge : piloted
 The Blast² that bore Sulaymán's Throne : and
 led
 The Cloud of Birds that canopied his Head ;
 Whose Word I brought to Balkís³ : and I shared
 The Counsel that with Ásaf he prepared.
 And now *you* want a Khalif : and I know
 Him, and his whereabouts, and How to go :
 And go alone I could, and plead your cause
 Alone for all : but, by the eternal laws,
 Yourselves by Toil and Travel of your own
 Must for your old Delinquency atone.
 Were you indeed not blinded by the Curse
 Of Self-exile, that still grows worse and worse,
 Yourselves would know that, though *you* see him
 not,
 He *is* with you this Moment, on this Spot,
 Your Lord through all Forgetfulness and Crime,
 Here, There, and Everywhere, and through all
 Time.
 But as a Father, whom some wayward Child
 By sinful Self-will has unreconciled,

¹ From Máh, the Moon, to Máhi, the Fish, on which the World was fabled to repose. As Attar says in the Introduction : 'God has placed the Earth on the back of the Bull : and the Bull on the Fish ; but the Fish on what ? On Nothing ; but nothing comes of Nothing, and therefore all this is Nothing,' or, as the Sufi expounds himself in the Poem, all the visible and material Universe merges into an Abstract Essence of Deity.

² The East Wind.

³ *Balkís* is Queen of Sheba ; *Ásaf*, Solomon's Vizier.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Waits till the sullen Reprobate at cost
Of long Repentance should regain the Lost,
Therefore, yourselves to see as you are seen,
Yourselves must bridge the Gulf you made
between

By such a Search and Travel to be gone
Up to the mighty mountain Káf, whereon
Hinges the World, and round about whose Knees
Into one Ocean mingle the Sev'n Seas ;
In whose impenetrable Forest-folds
Of Light and Dark 'Sýmurgh'¹ his Presence
holds ;

Not to be reach'd, if to be reach'd at all
But by a Road the stoutest might appal ;
Of Travel not of Days or Months, but Years—
Life-long perhaps : of Dangers, Doubts, and Fears
As yet unheard of : Sweat of Blood and Brain }
Interminable—often all in vain—
And, if successful, no Return again : }
A Road whose very Preparation scared
The Traveller who yet must be prepared.
Who then this Travel to Result would bring
Needs both a Lion's Heart beneath the Wing,
And even more, a Spirit purified
Of Worldly Passion, Malice, Lust, and Pride :
Yea, ev'n of Worldly *Wisdom*, which grows dim
And dark, the nearer it approaches *Him*,
Who to the Spirit's Eye alone reveal'd,
By sacrifice of Wisdom's self unseal'd ;

¹ Sýmurgh—i.e. 'Thirty-Birds'—a fabulous Creature like the Griffin of our Middle Ages : the Arabian *Anka*.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Without which none who reach the Place could
bear

To look upon the Glory dwelling there.'

One Night from out the swarming City Gate
Stept holy Bajazyd, to meditate
Alone amid the breathing Fields that lay
In solitary Silence leagues away,
Beneath a Moon and Stars as bright as Day. }
And the Saint wondering such a Temple were,
And so lit up, and scarce one worshipper,
A voice from Heav'n amid the stillness said ;
'The Royal Road is not for all to tread,
Nor is the Royal Palace for the Rout,
Who, even if they reach it, are shut out.
The Blaze that from my Harím window breaks
With fright the Rabble of the Roadside takes ;
And ev'n of those that at my Portal din,
Thousands may knock for one that enters in.'

Thus spoke the Tájidár : and the wing'd Crowd,
That underneath his Word in Silence bow'd,
Clapp'd Acclamation : and their Hearts and Eyes
Were kindled by the Firebrand of the Wise.
They felt their Degradation : they believed
The word that told them how to be retrieved,
And in that glorious Consummation won
Forgot the Cost at which it must be done.
'They only *long'd* to follow : they would go
Whither he led, through Flood, or Fire, or
Snow.'—

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

So cried the Multitude. But some there were
Who listen'd with a cold disdainful air,
Content with what they were, or grudging Cost
Of Time or Travel that might all be lost ;
These, one by one, came forward, and preferr'd
Unwise Objection : which the wiser Word
Shot with direct Reproof, or subtly round
With Argument and Allegory wound.

The Pheasant first would know by what pretence
The Tájidár to that pre-eminence
Was raised—a Bird, but for his lofty Crest
(And such the Pheasant had) like all the Rest—

Who answer'd—‘ By no Virtue of my own
Sulaymán chose me, but by *His* alone :
Not by the Gold and Silver of my Sighs
Made mine, but the free Largess of his Eyes.
Behold the Grace of Allah comes and goes
As to Itself is good : and no one knows
Which way it turns : in that mysterious Court
Not he most finds who furthest travels for't.
For one may crawl upon his knees Life-long,
And yet may never reach, or all go wrong :
Another just arriving at the Place
He toil'd for, and—the Door shut in his Face :
Whereas Another, scarcely gone a Stride,
And suddenly—Behold he is Inside !—
But though the Runner win not, he that *stands*,
No Thorn will turn to Roses in *his* Hands :
Each one must do his best and all endure,
And all endeavour, hoping but not sure.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Heav'n its own Umpire is ; its Bidding do,
And Thou perchance shalt be Sulaymán's too.'

One day Shah Mahmúd, riding with the Wind
A-hunting, left his Retinue behind,
And coming to a River, whose swift Course
Doubled back Game and Dog, and Man and
Horse,

Beheld upon the Shore a little Lad
A-fishing, very poor, and Tatter-clad
He was, and weeping as his Heart would break.
So the Great Sultán, for Good humour's sake
Pull'd in his Horse a moment, and drew nigh,
And after making his Salám, ask'd why
He wept—weeping, the Sultán said, so sore
As he had never seen one weep before.
The Boy look'd up, and ' Oh Amír,' he said, }
' Sev'n of us are at home, and Father dead, }
And Mother left with scarce a Bit of Bread : }
And now since Sunrise have I fish'd—and see !
Caught nothing for our Supper—Woe is Me !'
The Sultán lighted from his Horse. ' Behold,'
Said he, ' Good Fortune will not be controll'd :
And, since To-day yours seems to turn from you,
Suppose we try for once what mine will do,
And we will share alike in all I win.'

So the Shah took, and flung his Fortune in,
The Net ; which, cast by the Great Mahmúd's
Hand,
A hundred glittering Fishes brought to Land.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

The Lad look'd up in Wonder—Mahmúd
smiled

And vaulted into Saddle. But the Child
Ran after—‘Nay, Amír, but half the Haul
Is yours by Bargain’—‘Nay, To-day take all,’
The Sultán cried, and shook his Bridle free—
‘But mind—To-morrow All belongs to Me—’
And so rode off. Next morning at Divan
The Sultán’s Mind upon his Bargain ran,
And being somewhat in a mind for sport
Sent for the Lad : who, carried up to Court,
And marching into Royalty’s full Blaze
With such a Catch of Fish as yesterday’s,
The Sultán call’d and set him by his side,
And asking him, ‘What Luck?’ The Boy
replied,
‘*This* is the Luck that follows every Cast,
Since o’er my Net the Sultán’s Shadow pass’d.’

Then came *The Nightingale*, from such a Draught
Of Ecstasy that from the Rose he quaff’d
Reeling as drunk, and ever did distil
In exquisite Divisions from his Bill
To inflame the Hearts of Men—and thus sang
He—

‘To me alone, alone, is giv’n the Key
Of Love ; of whose whole Mystery possesst,
When I reveal a little to the Rest,
Forthwith Creation listening forsakes
The Reins of Reason, and my Frenzy takes :

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Yea, whosoever once has quaff'd this wine
He leaves unlisten'd David's Song for mine.
In vain do Men for my Divisions strive,
And die themselves making dead Lutes alive :
I hang the Stars with Meshes for Men's Souls :
The Garden underneath my Music rolls.
The long, long Morns that mourn the Rose
away

I sit in silence, and on Anguish prey :
But the first Air which the New Year shall
breathe

Up to my Boughs of Message from beneath
That in her green Harím my Bride unveils,
My Throat bursts silence and *her* Advent hails,
Who in her crimson Volume registers
The Notes of Him whose Life is lost in
hers.¹

The Rose I love and worship now is here ;
If dying, yet reviving, Year by Year ;
But that you tell of, all my Life why waste
In vainly searching ; or, if found, not taste ?'

So with Division infinite and Trill
On would the Nightingale have warbled still,
And all the World have listen'd ; but a Note
Of sterner Import check'd the love-sick Throat.

' Oh watering with thy melodious Tears
Love's Garden, and who dost indeed the Ears

¹ It was sometimes fancied that the Rose had as many Petals as
her Lover had Notes in his Voice.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Of men with thy melodious Fingers mould
As David's Finger Iron did of old¹ :
Why not, like David, dedicate thy Dower
Of Song to something better than a Flower ?
Empress indeed of Beauty, so they say,
But one whose Empire hardly lasts a Day,
By Insurrection of the Morning's Breath
That made her hurried to Decay and Death :
And while she lasts contented to be seen,
And worshipt, for the Garden's only Queen,
Leaving thee singing on thy Bough forlorn,
Or if she smile on Thee, perhaps in Scorn.'

Like that fond Dervish waiting in the throng
When some World-famous Beauty went along,
Who smiling on the Antic as she pass'd—
Forthwith Staff, Bead and Scrip away he cast,
And grovelling in the Kennel, took to whine
Before her Door among the Dogs and Swine.
Which when she often went unheeding by,
But one day quite as heedless ask'd him—
 'Why?'—

He told of that one Smile, which, all the Rest
Passing, had kindled Hope within his Breast—
Again she smiled and said, 'Oh self-beguiled
Poor Wretch, *at* whom and not *on* whom I smiled.'

Then came the subtle *Parrot* in a coat
Greener than Greensward, and about his Throat

¹ The Prophet David was supposed, in Oriental Legend, to have had the power to mould Iron into a Cuirass with the miraculous Power of his Finger.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

A Collar ran of sub-sulphureous Gold ;
And in his Beak a Sugar-plum he troll'd,
That all his Words with luscious Lispering ran,
And to this Tune—‘ Oh cruel Cage, and Man
More iron still who did confine me there,
Who else with him¹ whose Livery I wear
Ere this to his Eternal Fount had been,
And drunk what should have kept me ever-green.
But now I know the Place, and I am free
To go, and all the Wise will follow Me.
Some ’—and upon the Nightingale one Eye
He leer'd—‘ for nothing but the Blossom sigh :
But I am for the luscious Pulp that grows
Where, and for which the Blossom only blows :
And which so long as the Green Tree provides
What better grows along Káf's dreary Sides ?
And what more needful Prophet *there* than He
Who gives me Life to nip it from the Tree ? ’

To whom the Tájidár—‘ Oh thou whose Best
In the green leaf of Paradise is drest,
But whose Neck kindles with a lower Fire—
Oh slip the collar off of base Desire,
And stand apparell'd in Heav'n's Woof entire² !

¹ Khizar, Prophet and Keeper of the Well of Life ; habited always in the Green which the Angels were supposed to wear ; and, whether from that reason, or some peculiar Phenomenon in the Air, constantly called Sky-colour by the Persian Poets.

² The Sky is constantly called *Green* in Persian Poetry : whether because of the Tree of Heaven *Sidra* : or of some fabled Emerald in Káf on which the World hinges : or because Green has been chosen (for whatever Reason) for the Colour of *Life* and Honour. The green tinge of some Oriental Skies is indeed noticed by

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

This Life that hangs so sweet about your Lips
But, spite of all your Khizar, slips and slips,
What is it but itself the coarser Rind
Of the True Life withinside and behind,
Which he shall never never reach unto
Till the gross Shell of Carcase he break through ?'

For what said He, that dying Hermit, whom
Your Prophet came to, trailing through the
Gloom

His Emerald Vest, and tempted—'Come with Me,
And Live.' The Hermit answered—'Not with
Thee.

Two Worlds there are, and *This* was thy Design,
And thou hast got it ; but *The Next* is mine ;
Whose Fount is *this* Life's Death, and to whose
Side

Ev'n now I find my Way without a Guide.'

Then like a Sultán glittering in all Rays
Of Jewelry, and deckt with his own Blaze,
The glorious *Peacock* swept into the Ring :
And, turning slowly that the glorious Thing
Might fill all Eyes with wonder, thus said He.
'Behold, the Secret Artist, making me,

Travellers : as we see a little also in our Northern Sunrise and
Sunset : but still it must be an exceptional Phenomenon. *Blue*, or
Purple, is rather devoted to Death and Mourning in the East. As,
in this very Poem, one of the Stories is of the Sea being askt 'why
he dresses his Waves in Blue ?'—And he answers he does so for the
Loss of *One* who never will return.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

With no one Colour of the skies bedeckt,
But from its Angel's Feathers did select
To make up mine withal, the Gabriel
Of all the Birds : though from my Place I fell
In Eden, when Acquaintance I did make
In those blest Days with that Sev'n-headed Snake¹,
And thence with him, my perfect Beauty marr'd
With these ill Feet, was thrust out and debarr'd.
Little I care for Worldly Fruit or Flower,
Would you restore me to lost Eden's Bower,
But first my Beauty making all complete
With reparation of these ugly Feet.'

' Were it,' 'twas answer'd, ' only to return
To that lost Eden, better far to burn
In Self-abasement up thy plumèd Pride,
And ev'n with lamer feet to creep inside—
But all mistaken you and all like you
That long for that lost Eden as the true ;
Fair as it was, still nothing but the Shade
And Out-court of the Majesty that made
That which I point you tow'rd, and which the
King

I tell you of broods over with his Wing,
With no deciduous leaf, but with the Rose
Of Spiritual Beauty, smells and glows :
No plot of Earthly Pleasance, but the whole
True Garden of the Universal Soul.'

¹ And, as the Tradition went, let the Snake into Eden.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

For so Creation's Master-jewel fell
From that same Eden : loving which too
 well,
The Work before the Artist did prefer,
And in the Garden lost the Gardener.
Wherefore one Day about the Garden went
A voice that found him in his false Content,
And like a bitter Sarsar of the North¹
Shrivell'd the Garden up, and drove him forth
Into the Wilderness : and so the Eye
Of Eden closed on him till by and by.

Then from a Ruin where conceal'd he lay
Watching his buried Gold, and hating Day,
Hooted *The Owl*.—' I tell you, my Delight
Is in the Ruin and the Dead of Night
Where I was born, and where I love to wone
All my Life long, sitting on some cold stone,
Away from all your roystering Companies,
In some dark Corner where a Treasure lies ;
That, buried by some Miser in the Dark,
Speaks up to me at Midnight like a Spark ;
And o'er it like a Talisman I brood,
Companion of the Serpent and the Toad.
What need of other Sovereign, having found,
And keeping as in Prison underground,
One before whom all other Kings bow down,
And with his glittering Heel their Foreheads
 crown ?'

¹ Sarsar—a cold Blast.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

‘He that a Miser lives and Miser dies,
At the Last Day what Figure shall he rise?’

A Fellow all his life lived hoarding Gold,
And, dying, hoarded left it. And behold,
One Night his Son saw peering through the
House

A Man, with yet the semblance of a Mouse,
Watching a crevice in the Wall—and cried—
‘My Father?’—‘Yes,’ the *Musulman* replied,
‘Thy Father!’—‘But why watching thus?’—
‘For fear

Lest any smell my Treasure buried here.’
‘But wherefore, Sir, so metamorphosed?’
‘Because, my Son, such is the true outside
Of the inner Soul by which I lived and died.’ }

‘Ay,’ said *The Partridge*, with his Foot and
Bill

Crimson with raking Rubies from the Hill,
And clattering his Spurs—‘Wherewith the
Ground

‘I stab,’ said he, ‘for Rubies, that, when found
I swallow; which, as soon as swallow’d, turn
To Sparks which through my beak and eyes do
burn.

Gold, as you say, is but dull Metal dead,
And hanging on the Hoarder’s Soul like Lead:
But Rubies that have Blood within, and grown
And nourisht in the Mountain Heart of Stone,

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Burn with an inward Light, which they inspire,
And make their Owners Lords of their Desire.’¹

To whom the Tájidár—‘ As idly sold
To the quick Pebble as the drowsy Gold,
As dead when sleeping in their mountain mine
As dangerous to Him who makes them shine :
Slavish indeed to do their Lord’s Commands,
And slave-like, aptest to escape his Hands,
And serve a second Master like the first,²
And working all their wonders for the worst.’

Never was Jewel after or before
Like that Sulaymán for a Signet wore :
Whereby one Ruby, weighing scarce a grain
Did Sea and Land and all therein constrain,
Yea, ev’n the Winds of Heav’n—made the fierce
East

Bear his League-wide Pavilion like a Beast,
Whither he would : yea, the Good Angel held
His subject, and the lower Fiend compell’d.
Till, looking round about him in his pride,
He overtax’d the Fountain that supplied,
Praying that after him no Son of Clay
Should ever touch his Glory. And one Day }
Almighty God his Jewel stole away,

¹ Every Jewel had its special Charm, and so was worn in Ring or Amulet.

² There is a Story of some one who falling from a Roof, and wondering what his Turquoise had done for him, was answered, ‘Well—you see it has kept itself unbroken.’

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

And gave it to the Div, who with the Ring
Wore also the Resemblance of the King,
And so for forty days play'd such a Game
As blots Sulaymán's forty years with Shame.

Then *The Shah-Falcon*, tossing up his Head
Blink-hooded as it was—'Behold,' he said,
'I am the chosen Comrade of the King,
And perch upon the Fist that wears the Ring ;
Born, bred, and nourisht, in the Royal Court,
I take the Royal Name and make the Sport.
And if strict Discipline I undergo
And half my Life am blinded—be it so ;
Because the Shah's Companion ill may brook
On aught save Royal Company to look.
And why am I to leave my King, and fare
With all these Rabble Wings I know not
where ?'—

'Oh blind indeed'—the Answer was, 'and dark
To any but a vulgar Mortal Mark,
And drunk with Pride of Vassalage to those
Whose Humour like their Kingdom comes and
goes ;
All Mutability : who one Day please
To give : and next Day what they gave not
seize :
Like to the Fire : a dangerous Friend at best,
Which who keeps farthest from does wiseliest.'

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

A certain Shah there was in Days foregone
 Who had a lovely Slave he doated on,
 And cherish'd as the Apple of his Eye,
 Clad gloriously, fed sumptuously, set high, }
 And never was at Ease were *He* not by,
 Who yet, for all this Sunshine, Day by Day
 Was seen to wither like a Flower away.
 Which, when observing, one without the Veil
 Of Favour ask'd the Favourite—' Why so pale
 And sad ? ' thus sadly answer'd the poor Thing—
 ' No Sun that rises sets until the King,
 Whose Archery is famous among Men,
 Aims at an Apple on my Head ;¹ and when
 The stricken Apple splits, and those who stand
 Around cry " Lo ! the Shah's unerring Hand ! "
 Then He too laughing asks me " Why so pale
 And sorrow-some ? as could the Sultan fail,
 Who such a master of the Bow confest,
 And aiming by the Head that he loves best. "'

Then on a sudden swoop'd *The Phœnix* down
 As though he wore as well as gave The Crown² :

¹ Tell's Apple, long before his Time : and, by whomsoever invented, a Fancy which (as was likely) would take lasting hold of the Oriental Mind. In Chodzko's *Popular Persian Songs* (Oriental Translation Fund, 1842) is a sort of Funeral Chaunt on Zulfakhar Khan by one of his Slaves ; and the following Passage in it : ' Your Gun from the Manufactory of Loristan shines like a Cloud gilded by the Rays of the Sun. Oh Serdar ! your Place is now empty : you were my Master : Your Gun from the Manufactory of Cabúl shined in your Hands like a Bunch of Roses. Your Ball never missed a Flower put in the middle of my Front Hair.'

² He was supposed to be destined to Sovereignty over whom the Shadow of the wings of the Phœnix passed.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

And cried—‘ I care not, I, to wait on Kings,
Whose crowns are but the Shadow of my
Wings !’

‘ Ay,’ was the Answer—‘ And, pray, how has
sped,
On which it lighted, many a mortal Head ?’

A certain Sultán dying, his Vizier
In Dream beheld him, and in mortal Fear
Began—‘ Oh mighty Shah of Shahs ! Thrice-
blest’—

But loud the Vision shriek’d and struck its Breast,
And ‘ Stab me not with empty Title !’ cried—
‘ One only Shah there is, and none beside,
Who from his Throne above for certain Ends
Awhile some Spangle of his Glory lends
To Men on Earth ; but calling in again
Exacts a strict account of every Grain.
Sultán I lived, and held the World in scorn :
Oh better had I glean’d the Field of Corn !
Oh better had I been a Beggar born,
And for my Throne and Crown, down in the Dust
My living Head had laid where Dead I must !
Oh wither’d, wither’d, wither’d, be the Wing
Whose overcasting Shadow made me King !’

Then from a Pond, where all day long he kept,
Waddled the dapper *Duck* demure, adept
At infinite Ablution, and precise
In keeping of his Raiment clean and nice.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

And 'Sure of all the Race of Birds,' said He,
'None for Religious Purity like Me,
Beyond what strictest Rituals prescribe—
Methinks I am the Saint of all our Tribe,
To whom, by Miracle, the Water, that
I wash in, also makes my Praying-Mat.'

To whom, more angrily than all, replied
The Leader, lashing that religious Pride,
That under ritual Obedience
To outer Law with inner might dispense :
For, fair as all the Feather to be seen,
Could one see *through*, the Maw was not so clean :
But He that made both Maw and Feather too
Would take account of, seeing through and
through.

A Shah returning to his Capital,
His subjects drest it forth in Festival,
Thronging with Acclamation Square and Street,
And kneeling flung before his Horse's feet
Jewel and Gold. All which with scarce an Eye
The Sultán superciliously rode by :
Till coming to the public Prison, They
Who dwelt within those grisly Walls, by way
Of Welcome, having neither Pearl nor Gold,
Over the wall chopt Head and Carcase roll'd,
Some almost parcht to Mummy with the Sun,
Some wet with Execution that day done.
At which grim Compliment at last the Shah
Drew Bridle : and amid a wild Hurrah

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Of savage Recognition, smiling threw
Silver and Gold among the wretched Crew,
And so rode forward. Whereat of his Train
One wondering that, while others sued in vain
With costly gifts, which carelessly he pass'd,
But smiled at ghastly Welcome like the last ;
The Shah made answer—‘ All that Pearl and Gold
Of ostentatious Welcome only told :
A little with great Clamour from the Store
Of Hypocrites who kept at home much more.
But when those sever'd Heads and Trunks I saw—
Save by strict Execution of my Law
They had not parted company ; not one
But told my Will not talk’d about, but *done.*’

Then from a Wood was heard unseen to coo
The Ring-dove—‘ Yúsuf ! Yúsuf ! Yúsuf ! Yú-’
(For thus her sorrow broke her Note in twain,
And, just where broken, took it up again)
‘ -suf ! Yúsuf ! Yúsuf ! Yúsuf ! ’—But one Note,
Which still repeating, she made hoarse her throat :
Till checkt—‘ Oh You, who with your idle Sighs
Block up the Road of better Enterprize ;
Sham Sorrow all, or bad as sham if true,
When once the better thing is come to *do* ;
Beware lest wailing thus you meet *his* Doom
Who all too long his Darling wept, from whom
You draw the very Name you hold so dear,
And which the World is somewhat tired to hear.’

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

When Yúsuf from his Father's Home was torn,
The Patriarch's Heart was utterly forlorn,
And, like a Pipe with but one stop, his Tongue
With nothing but the name of 'Yúsuf' rung.
Then down from Heaven's Branches flew the
*Bird*¹

Of Heav'n, and said 'God wearies of that word :
Hast thou not else to do and else to say ?' }
So Yacúb's lips were sealéd from that Day. }
But one Night in a Vision, far away
His darling in some alien Field he saw
Binding the Sheaf ; and what between the
Awe

Of God's Displeasure and the bitter Pass
Of passionate Affection, sigh'd 'Alas—'
And stopp'd—But with the morning Sword of
Flame

That oped his Eyes the sterner Angel's came—
'For the forbidden Word not utter'd by
Thy Lips was yet sequester'd in that Sigh.'
And the right Passion whose Excess was wrong
Blinded the aged Eyes that wept too long.

And after these came others—arguing,
Enquiring and excusing—some one Thing,
And some another—endless to repeat,
But, in the Main, Sloth, Folly, or Deceit.
Their Souls were to the vulgar Figure cast
Of earthly Victual not of Heavenly Fast.

¹ Gabriel.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

At last one smaller Bird, of a rare kind,
Of modest Plume and unpretentious Mind,
Whisper'd, 'Oh Tájidár, we know indeed
How Thou both knowest, and would'st help our
Need ;

For thou art wise and holy, and hast been
Behind the Veil, and there *The Presence* seen.

But we are weak and vain, with little care
Beyond our yearly Nests and daily Fare—
How should we reach the Mountain? and if there
How get so great a Prince to hear our Prayer?
For there, you say, dwells *The Symurgh* alone
In Glory, like Sulaymán on his Throne,
And we but Pismires at his feet : can He
Such puny Creatures stoop to hear, or see ;
Or hearing, seeing, *own* us—unakin
As He to Folly, Woe, and Death, and Sin ?'—

To whom the Tájidár, whose Voice for those
Bewilder'd ones to full Compassion rose—
'Oh lost so long in Exile, you disclaim
The very Fount of Being whence you came,
Cannot be parted from, and, will or no,
Whither for Good or Evil must re-flow !
For look—the Shadows into which the Light
Of his pure Essence down by infinite
Gradation dwindles, which at random play
Through Space in Shape indefinite—one Ray
Of his Creative *Will* into *defined*
Creation quickens : We that swim the Wind,

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

And they the Flood below, and Man and Beast
 That walk between, from Lion to the least
 Pismire that creeps along Sulaymán's Wall—
 Yea, that in which they swim, fly, walk, and crawl—
 However near the Fountain Light, or far
 Removed, yet *His* authentic Shadows are ;
 Dead Matter's Self but the dark Residue
 Exterminating Glory dwindles to.
 A Mystery too fearful in the Crowd
 To utter—scarcely to Thyself aloud—
 But when in solitary Watch and Prayer
 Consider'd : and religiously beware
 Lest Thou the Copy with the Type confound ;
 And *Deity*, with Deity indrown'd,—
 For as pure Water into purer Wine
 Incorporating shall itself refine
 While the dull Drug lies half-resolved below,
 With Him and with his Shadows is it so :
 The baser Forms, to whatsoever Change
 Subject, still vary through their lower Range :
 To which the *higher* even shall decay,
 That, letting ooze their better Part away
 For Things of Sense and Matter, in the End
 Shall merge into the Clay to which they tend.
 Unlike to him, who straining through the Bond
 Of outward Being for a Life beyond,
 While the gross Worldling to *his* Centre clings, }
 That draws him deeper in, exulting springs }
 To merge him in the central *Soul* of Things. }
 And shall not he pass home with other Zest
 Who, with full Knowledge, yearns for such a Rest,

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Than he, who with his better self at strife,
Drags on the weary Exile call'd *This Life*?—
One, like a child with outstretcht Arms and
Face

Up-turn'd, anticipates his Sire's Embrace ;
The other crouching like a guilty Slave
Till flogg'd to Punishment across the Grave.
And, knowing that *His* glory ill can bear
The unpurg'd Eye ; do thou Thy Breast prepare ; }
And the mysterious Mirror He set there,
To temper his reflected Image in,
Clear of Distortion, Doubleness, and Sin :
And in thy Conscience understanding *this*,
The *Double* only *seems*, but The *One is*,
Thy-self to Self-annihilation give
That this false *Two* in that true *One* may live.
For this I say : if, looking in thy Heart,
Thou for *Self-whole* mistake thy *Shadow-part*,
That Shadow-part indeed into *The Sun*
Shall melt, but senseless of its Union :
But in that Mirror if with purgèd eyes
Thy Shadow Thou *for* Shadow recognize,
Then shalt Thou back into thy Centre fall
A conscious Ray of that eternal *All*.'

He ceased, and for a while Amazement quell'd
The Host, and in the Chain of Silence held :
A Mystery so awful who would dare—
So glorious who would not wish—to share ?
So Silence brooded on the feather'd Folk,
Till here and there a timid Murmur broke

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

From some too poor in honest Confidence,
And then from others of too much Pretence ;
Whom both, as each unduly hoped or fear'd,
The Tájidár in answer check'd or cheer'd.

Some said their Hearts were good indeed to go
The Way he pointed out : but they were slow
Of Comprehension, and scarce understood }
Their present Evil or the promised Good : }
And so, tho' willing to do all they could, }
Must not they fall short, or go wholly wrong,
On such mysterious Errand, and so long ?
Whom the wise Leader bid but Do their Best
In Hope and Faith, and leave to *Him* the rest,
For He who fix'd the Race, and knew its Length
And Danger, also knew the Runner's Strength.

Shah Mahmúd, absent on an Enterprize,
Ayas, the very Darling of his eyes,
At home under an Evil Eye fell sick,
Then cried the Sultán to a soldier ' Quick !
To Horse ! to Horse ! without a Moment's Stay,—
The shortest Road with all the Speed you may,—
Or, by the Lord, your Head shall pay for it !'—
Off went the Soldier, plying Spur and Bit—
Over the Sandy Desert, over green
Valley, and Mountain, and the Stream between,
Without a Moment's Stop for rest or bait,—
Up to the City—to the Palace Gate—
Up to the Presence-Chamber at a Stride—
And Lo ! The Sultán at his Darling's side !—

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Then thought the Soldier—‘I have done my Best,
And yet shall die for it.’ The Sultán guess’d
His Thought and smiled. ‘Indeed your Best
you did,

The nearest Road you knew, and well you rid :
And if *I* knew a shorter, my Excess
Of Knowledge does but justify thy Less.’

And then, with drooping Crest and Feather, came
Others, bow’d down with Penitence and Shame.
They long’d indeed to go ; ‘but how begin,
Mesh’d and entangled as they were in Sin
Which often-times Repentance of past Wrong
As often broken had but knit more strong ?’

Whom the wise Leader bid be of good cheer,
And, conscious of the Fault, dismiss the Fear,
Nor at the very Entrance of the Fray
Their Weapon, ev’n if broken, fling away :
Since Mercy on the broken Branch anew
Would blossom were but each Repentance true.

For did not God his Prophet take to Task ?
‘*Sev’n-times* of Thee did Kárún Pardon ask ;
Which, hadst thou been like Me his Maker—yea,
But present at the Kneading of his Clay
With those twain Elements of Hell and Heav’n,—
One prayer had won what Thou deny’st to Sev’n.’

For like a Child sent with a fluttering Light
To feel his way along a gusty Night

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Man walks the World : again and yet again
The Lamp shall be by Fits of Passion slain :
But shall not He who sent him from the Door
Relight the Lamp once more, and yet once more ?

When the rebellious Host from Death shall wake
Black with Despair of Judgment, God shall take
Ages of holy Merit from the Count
Of Angels to make up Man's short Amount,
And bid the murmuring Angel gladly spare
Of that which, undiminishing his Share
Of Bliss, shall rescue Thousands from the Cost
Of Bankruptcy within the Prison lost.¹

Another Story told how in the Scale
Good Will beyond mere Knowledge would
prevail.

In Paradise the Angel Gabriel heard
The Lips of Allah trembling with the Word
Of perfect Acceptation : and he thought
'Some perfect Faith such perfect Answer
wrought,
But whose ?'—And therewith slipping from the
Crypt
Of Sidra,² through the Angel-ranks he slipt
Watching what Lip yet trembled with the Shot
That so had hit the Mark—but found it not.

¹ This paragraph may be omitted, and the two preceding ones reversed.

² Sidra, the Tree of Paradise, or Heaven.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Then, in a Glance to Earth, he threaded through
Mosque, Palace, Cell and Cottage of the True
Belief—in vain ; so back to Heaven went
And—Allah's Lips still trembling with assent !
Then the tenacious Angel once again
Threaded the Ranks of Heav'n and Earth—in
vain—

Till, once again return'd to Paradise,
There, looking into God's, the Angel's Eyes
Beheld the Prayer that brought that Benison
Rising like Incense from the Lips of one
Who to an Idol bow'd—as best he knew
Under that False God worshipping the True.

And then came others whom the summons found
Not wholly sick indeed, but far from sound :
Whose light inconstant Soul alternate flew
From Saint to Sinner, and to both untrue ;
Who like a niggard Tailor, tried to match
Truth's single Garment with a worldly Patch.
A dangerous Game ; for, striving to adjust
The hesitating Scale of either Lust,
That which had least within it upward flew,
And still the weightier to the Earth down drew,
And, while suspended between Rise and Fall,
Apt with a shaking Hand to forfeit all.

There was a Queen of Egypt like the Bride
Of Night, Full-moon-faced and Canopus-eyed,
Whom one among the meanest of her Crowd
Loved—and she knew it, (for he loved aloud)

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

And sent for him, and said 'Thou lovest thy Queen:
Now therefore Thou hast this to choose between :
Fly for thy Life : or for this one night Wed
Thy Queen, and with the Sunrise lose thy Head.' }
He paused—he turn'd to fly—she struck him }
dead.

'For had he truly loved his Queen,' said She,
'He would at once have given his Life for me,
And Life and Wife had carried : but he lied ;
And loving only Life, has justly died.'

And then came one who having clear'd his Throat
With sanctimonious Sweetness in his Note
Thus lisp'd—'Behold I languish from the first
With passionate and unrequited Thirst
Of Love for more than any mortal Bird.
Therefore have I withdrawn me from the Herd
To pine in Solitude. But Thou at last
Hast drawn a line across the dreary Past,
And sure I am by Fore-taste that the Wine
I long'd for, and Thou tell'st of, shall be mine.'

But he was sternly checkt. 'I tell thee this :
Such Boast is no Assurance of such Bliss :
Thou canst not even fill the sail of Prayer
Unless from *Him* breathe that authentic Air
That shall lift up the Curtain that divides
His Lover from the Harím where *He* hides—
And the Fulfilment of thy Vows must be,
Not from thy Love for Him, but His for Thee.'

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

The third night after Bajazyd had died,
One saw him, in a dream, at his Bed-side,
And said, 'Thou Bajazyd? Tell me Oh Pýr,
How fared it there with Munkar and Nakýr¹?'
And Bajazyd replied, 'When from the Grave
They met me rising, and "If Allah's slave"
Ask'd me, "or collar'd with the Chain of Hell?"'
I said "Not I but God alone can tell:
My Passion for his service were but fond
Ambition had not He approved the Bond:
Had He not round my neck the Collar thrown
And told me in the Number of his own;
And that *He* only knew. What signifies
A hundred Years of Prayer if none replies?"'

'But' said Another, 'then shall none the Seal
Of Acceptation on his Forehead feel
Ere the Grave yield them on the other Side
Where all is settled?'

But the Chief replied—
'Enough for us to know that who is meet
Shall enter, and with unreprieved Feet,
(Ev'n as he might upon the Waters walk)
The Presence-room, and in the Presence talk
With such unbridled License as shall seem
To the Uninitiated to blaspheme.'

Just as another Holy Spirit fled,
The Skies above him burst into a Bed

¹ The two Angels who examine the Soul on its leaving the Body.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Of Angels looking down and singing clear
‘Nightingale ! Nightingale ! thy Rose is here !’
And yet, the Door wide open to that Bliss,
As some hot Lover slights a scanty Kiss,
The Saint cried ‘ All I sigh’d for come to *this* ?’ }
I who life-long have struggled, Lord, to be
Not of thy Angels one, but one with Thee !’

Others were sure that all he said was true :
They were extremely wicked, that they knew :
And much they long’d to go at once—but some,
They said, so unexpectedly had come
Leaving their Nests half-built—in bad Repair—
With Children in—Themselves about to pair—
‘ Might he not choose a better Season—nay,
Better perhaps a Year or Two’s Delay,
Till all was settled, and themselves more stout
And strong to carry their Repentance out—
And then’—

‘ And then, the same or like Excuse,
With harden’d Heart and Resolution loose
With dallying : and old Age itself engaged
Still to shirk that which shirking we have aged ;
And so with Self-delusion, till, too late,
Death upon all Repentance shuts the Gate ;
Or some fierce blow compels the Way to choose,
And forced Repentance half its Virtue lose.’

As of an aged Indian King they tell
Who, when his Empire with his Army fell

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Under young Mahmúd's Sword of Wrath, was
sent

At sunset to the Conqueror in his Tent ;
But, ere the old King's silver head could reach
The Ground, was lifted up—with kindly Speech,
And with so holy Mercy re-assured,
That, after due Persuasion, he abjured
His Idols, sate upon Mahmúd's Diván,
And took the Name and Faith of Musulman.
But when the Night fell, in his Tent alone
The poor old King was heard to weep and groan
And smite his Bosom ; which, when Mahmúd
knew,

He went to him and said ' Lo, if Thou rue
Thy lost Dominion, Thou shalt wear the Ring
Of thrice as large a Realm.' But the dark King
Still wept, and Ashes on his Forehead threw
And cried ' Not for my Kingdom lost I rue ;
But thinking how at the Last Day, will stand
The Prophet with *The Volume* in his Hand,
And ask of me " How was't that, in thy Day
Of Glory, Thou didst turn from Me and slay
My People ; but soon as thy Infidel
Before my True Believers' Army fell
Like Corn before the Reaper—thou didst own }
His Sword who scoutedst *Me*." Of seed so sown }
What profitable Harvest should be grown ? ' }

'Then after cheering others who delay'd,
Not of the Road but of Themselves afraid,

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

The Tájidár the Troop of those address'd,
Whose uncomplying Attitude confess'd
Their Souls entangled in the old Deceit,
And hankering still after forbidden Meat—

‘Oh ye who so long feeding on the Husk
Forgo the Fruit, and doating on the Dusk
Of the false Dawn, are blinded to the True :
That in the Maidán of this World pursue
The Golden Ball which, driven to the Goal,
Wins the World's Game but loses your own
Soul :

Or like to Children after Bubbles run
That still elude your Fingers ; or, if won,
Burst in Derision at your Touch ; all thin
Glitter without, and empty Wind within.
So as a prosperous Worldling on the Bed
Of Death—“ Behold, I am as one,” he said,
“ Who all my Life long have been measuring
Wind,

And, dying, now leave even that behind ”—
This World's a Nest in which the Cockatrice
Is warm'd and hatcht of Vanity and Vice :
A false Bazár whose Wares are all a lie,
Or never worth the Price at which you buy :
A many-headed Monster that, supplied
The faster, faster is unsatisfied ;
So as one, hearing a rich Fool one day
To God for yet one other Blessing pray,
Bid him no longer bounteous Heaven tire
For Life to feed, but Death to quench, the Fire.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

And what are all the Vanities and Wiles
In which the false World decks herself and
smiles

To draw Men down into her harlot Lap ?
Lusts of the Flesh that Soul and Body sap,
And, melting Soul down into carnal Lust,
Ev'n that for which 'tis sacrificed disgust :
Or Lust of worldly Glory—hollow more
Than the Drum beaten at the Sultán's Door,
And fluctuating with the Breath of Man
As the Vain Banner flapping in the Van.
And Lust of Gold—perhaps of Lusts the worst ;
The mis-created Idol most accurst
That between Man and Him who made him
stands :

The Felon that with suicidal hands
He sweats to dig and rescue from his Grave,
And sets at large to make Himself its Slave.

‘ For lo, to what worse than oblivion gone
Are some the cozening World most doated on ?
Pharaoh tried *Glory* : and his Chariots drown'd :
Kárún with all his Gold went underground :
Down toppled Nembroth¹ with his airy Stair :
Schedád among his Roses lived—but *where* ?

‘ And as the World upon her victims feeds
So She herself goes down the Way she leads.
For all her false allurements are the Threads
The Spider from her Entrail spins, and spreads

¹ Nimrod.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

For Home and hunting-ground : And by and by
Darts at due Signal on the tangled Fly,
Seizes, dis-wings, and drains the Life, and leaves
The swinging Carcase, and forthwith re-weaves
Her Web : each Victim adding to the store
Of poison'd Entrail to entangle more.
And so She bloats in Glory : till one Day
The Master of the House, passing that way,
Perceives, and with one flourish of his Broom
Of Web and Fly and Spider clears the Room.

‘ Behold, dropt through the Gate of Mortal Birth,
The Knightly Soul alights from Heav’n on Earth ;
Begins his Race, but scarce the Saddle feels, }
When a foul Imp up from the distance steals, }
And, double as he will, about his Heels
Closer and ever closer circling creeps,
Then, half-invited, on the Saddle leaps,
Clings round the Rider, and, once there, in vain
The strongest strives to thrust him off again.
In Childhood just peeps up the Blade of Ill,
That Youth to Lust rears, Fury, and Self-will :
And, as Man cools to sensual Desire,
Ambition catches with as fierce a Fire ;
Until Old Age sends him with one last Lust
Of Gold, to keep it where he found—in Dust.
Life at both Ends so feeble and constrain’d
How should that Imp of Sin be slain or chain’d ?

‘ And woe to him who feeds the hateful Beast
That of his Feeder makes an after-feast !

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

We know the Wolf : by Stratagem and Force
Can hunt the Tiger down : but what Resource
Against the Plague we heedless hatch within,
Then, growing, pamper into full-blown Sin
With the Soul's self : ev'n, as the wise man said,
Feeding the very Devil with God's own Bread ;
Until the Lord his Largess misapplied
Resent, and drive us wholly from his Side ?

‘ For should the Grey-hound whom a Sultán fed,
And by a jewell'd String a-hunting led,
Turn by the Way to gnaw some nasty Thing
And snarl at Him who twitch'd the silken String,
Would not his Lord soon weary of Dispute,
And turn adrift the incorrigible Brute ?

‘ Nay, would one follow, and without a Chain,
The only Master truly worth the Pain,
One must beware lest, growing over-fond
Of even Life's more consecrated Bond,
We clog our Footsteps to the World beyond. }
Like that old Arab Chieftain, who confess'd
His soul by two too Darling Things possess'd—
That only Son of his : and that one Colt
Descended from the Prophet's Thunderbolt.¹
“ And I might well bestow the last,” he said,
“ On him who brought me Word the Boy was
dead.”

‘ And if so vain the glittering Fish we get,
How doubly vain to doat upon the Net,

¹ The Famous Borak.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Call'd Life, that draws them, patching up this thin
Tissue of Breathing out and Breathing in,
And so by husbanding each wretched Thread
Spin out Death's very Terror that we dread—
For as the Rain-drop from the sphere of God
Dropt for a while into the Mortal Clod
So little makes of its allotted Time
Back to its Heav'n itself to re-sublime,
That it but serves to saturate its Clay
With Bitterness that will not pass away.'

One day the Prophet on a River Bank,
Dipping his Lips into the Channel, drank
A Draught as sweet as Honey. Then there came
One who an earthen Pitcher from the same
Drew up, and drank : and after some short stay
Under the Shadow, rose and went his Way,
Leaving his earthen Bowl. In which, anew
Thirsting, the Prophet from the River drew,
And drank from : but the Water that came up
Sweet from the Stream, drank bitter from the Cup.
At which the Prophet in a still Surprise
For Answer turning up to Heav'n his Eyes,
The Vessel's Earthen Lips with Answer ran—
'The Clay that I am made of once was *Man*,
Who dying, and resolved into the same
Obliterated Earth from which he came,
Was for the Potter dug, and chased in turn
Through long Vicissitude of Bowl and Urn :
But howsoever moulded, still the Pain
Of that first mortal Anguish would retain,

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

And cast, and re-cast, for a Thousand years
Would turn the sweetest Water into Tears.'

And after Death ?—that, shirk it as we may,
Will come, and with it bring its After-Day—

For ev'n as Yúsuf, (when his Brotherhood
Came up from Egypt to buy Corn, and stood
Before their Brother in his lofty Place,
Nor knew him, for a Veil before his Face,)
Struck on his Mystic Cup, which straightway then
Rung out their Story to those guilty Ten :—
Not to *them* only, but to every one ;
Whatever he have said and thought and done,
Unburied with the Body shall fly up,
And gather into Heav'n's inverted Cup,
Which, stricken by God's Finger, shall tell all
The Story whereby we must stand or fall.
And though we walk this World as if behind
There were no Judgment, or the Judge half-blind,
Beware, for He with whom we have to do
Outsees the Lynx, outlives the Phœnix too—

So Sultán Mahmúd, coming Face to Face
With mightier numbers of the swarthy Race,
Vow'd that if God to him the battle gave,
God's Dervish People all the Spoil should have.
And God the Battle gave him ; and the Fruit
Of a great Conquest coming to compute,
A Murmur through the Sultán's Army stirr'd
Lest, ill committed to one hasty Word,

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

The Shah should squander on an idle Brood
What should be theirs who earn'd it with their
 Blood,
Or go to fill the Coffers of the State.
So Mahmúd's Soul began to hesitate :
Till looking round in Doubt from side to side
A raving Zealot in the Press he spied,
And call'd and had him brought before his Face,
And, telling, bid him arbitrate the case.
Who, having listen'd, said—'The Thing is plain :
If Thou and God should never have again
To deal together, rob him of his share :
But if perchance you should—why then Be-
 ware !'

So spake the Tájidár : but Fear and Doubt
Among the Birds in Whispers went about :
Great was their Need : and Succour to be sought
At any Risk : at any Ransom bought :
But such a Monarch—greater than Mahmúd
The Great Himself ! Why how should he be
 woo'd

To listen to them ? they too having come
So suddenly, and unprepared from home
With any Gold, or Jewel, or rich Thing
To carry with them to so great a King—
Poor Creatures ! with the old and carnal Blind,
Spite of all said, so thick upon the Mind,
Devising how they might ingratiate
Access, as to some earthly Potentate.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

‘ Let him that with this Monarch would engage
Bring the Gold Dust of a long Pilgrimage :
The Ruby of a bleeding Heart, whose Sighs
Breathe more than Amber-incense as it dies ;
And while in naked Beggary he stands
Hope for the Robe of Honour from his Hands.
And, as no gift this Sovereign receives
Save the mere Soul and Self of him who gives,
So let that Soul for other none Reward
Look than the Presence of its Sovereign Lord.’
And as his Hearers seem’d to estimate
Their Scale of Glory from Mahmúd the Great,
A simple Story of the Sultán told
How best a subject with his Shah made bold—

One night Shah Mahmúd who had been of late
Somewhat distemper’d with Affairs of State
Stroll’d through the Streets disguised, as wont to
do—

And, coming to the Baths, there on the Flue
Saw the poor Fellow who the Furnace fed
Sitting beside his Water-jug and Bread.
Mahmúd stept in—sat down—unask’d took up
And tasted of the untasted Loaf and Cup,
Saying within himself, ‘ Grudge but a bit,
And, by the Lord, your Head shall pay for it !’
So having rested, warm’d and satisfied
Himself without a Word on either side,
At last the wayward Sultán rose to go.
And then at last his Host broke silence—‘ So ?—

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Art satisfied? Well, Brother, any Day
Or Night, remember, when you come this Way
And want a bit of Provender—why, you
Are welcome, and if not—why, welcome too.’—
The Sultán was so tickled with the whim
Of this quaint Entertainment and of him
Who offer’d it, that many a Night again
Stoker and Shah forgather’d in that Vein—
Till, the poor Fellow having stood the Test
Of true Good-fellowship, Mahmúd confess’d
One Night the Sultán that had been his Guest : }
And in requital of the scanty Dole
The Poor Man offer’d with so large a soul,
Bid him ask any Largess that he would—
A Throne—if he *would* have it, so he *should*.
The Poor Man kiss’d the Dust, and ‘ All,’ said he,
‘ I ask is what and where I am to be ;
If but the Shah from time to time will come
As now and see me in the lowly Home
His presence makes a palace, and my own
Poor Flue more royal than another’s Throne.’

So said the cheery Tale : and, as they heard,
Again the Heart beneath the Feather stirr’d :
Again forgot the Danger and the Woes
Of the long Travel in its glorious Close :—
‘ Here truly all was Poverty, Despair
And miserable Banishment—but *there*
That more than Mahmúd, for no more than
Prayer

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Who would restore them to their ancient Place,
And round their Shoulders fling his Robe of
Grace.'

They clapp'd their Wings, on Fire to be assay'd
And prove of what true Metal they were made,
Although defaced, and wanting the true Ring
And Superscription of their rightful King.

'The Road ! The Road !' in countless voices
cried

The Host—'The Road ! and who shall be our
Guide ?'

And they themselves 'The Tájidár !' replied :
Yet to make doubly certain that the Voice
Of Heav'n accorded with the People's Choice,
Lots should be drawn ; and He on whom should
light

Heav'n's Hand—they swore to follow him out-
right.

This settled, and once more the Hubbub quell'd,
Once more Suspense the Host in Silence held,
While, Tribe by Tribe, the Birds their Fortune
drew ;

And Lo ! upon the Tájidár it flew.

Then rising up again in wide and high
Circumference of wings that mesh'd the sky

'The Tájidár ! The Tájidár !' they cry—

'The Tájidár ! The Tájidár !' with Him
Was Heav'n, and They would follow Life and
Limb !

Then, once more fluttering to their Places down,
Upon his Head they set the Royal Crown

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

As Khalif of their Khalif so long lost,
And Captain of his now repentant Host ;
And setting him on high, and Silence call'd,
The Tájidár, in Pulpit-throne install'd,
His Voice into a Trumpet-tongue so clear
As all the wingèd Multitude should hear
Raised, to proclaim the Order and Array
Of March ; which, many as it frighten'd—yea,
The Heart of Multitudes at outset broke,
Yet for due Preparation must be spoke.

—A Road indeed that never Wing before
Flew, nor Foot trod, nor Heart imagined—o'er }
Waterless Deserts—Waters where no Shore— }
Valleys comprising cloudhigh Mountains : these
Again their Valleys deeper than the Seas :
Whose Dust all Adders, and whose vapour
Fire :

Where all once hostile Elements conspire
To set the Soul against herself, and tear
Courage to Terror—Hope into Despair,
And Madness ; Terrors, Trials, to make stray
Or stop where Death to wander or delay :
Where when half dead with Famine, Toil, and
Heat,

'Twas Death indeed to rest, or drink, or eat.
A Road still waxing in Self-sacrifice
As it went on : still ringing with the Cries
And Groans of Those who had not yet prevail'd,
And bleaching with the Bones of those who
fail'd :

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Where, almost all withstood, perhaps to earn
Nothing : and, earning, never to return.—

And first the *VALE OF SEARCH* : an endless
Maze,

Branching into innumerable Ways
All courting Entrance : but one right : and
this

Beset with Pitfall, Gulf, and Precipice,
Where Dust is Embers, Air a fiery Sleet,
Through which with blinded Eyes and bleeding
Feet

The Pilgrim stumbles, with Hyæna's Howl
Around, and hissing Snake, and deadly Ghoul,
Whose Prey he falls if tempted but to droop,
Or if to wander famish'd from the Troop
For fruit that falls to ashes in the Hand,
Water that reacht recedes into the Sand.
The only word is 'Forward !' Guide in
sight,

After him, swerving neither left nor right,
Thyself for thine own Victual by Day,
At night thine own Self's Caravanserai.
Till suddenly, perhaps when most subdued
And desperate, the Heart shall be renew'd
When deep in utter Darkness, by one Gleam
Of Glory from the far remote *Harim*,
That, with a scarcely conscious Shock of Change,
Shall light the Pilgrim toward the Mountain
Range

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Of KNOWLEDGE¹: where, if stronger and more
 pure
 The Light and Air, yet harder to endure ;
 And if, perhaps, the Footing more secure,
 Harder to keep up with a nimble Guide,
 Less from lost Road than insufficient Stride—
 Yet tempted still by false Shows from the
 Track,
 And by false Voices call'd aside or back,
 Which echo from the Bosom, as if won
 The Journey's End when only just begun,
 And not a Mountain Peak with Toil attain'd
 But shows a Top yet higher to be gain'd.

¹ In the original Poem there are *Seven* Valleys of Probation : not very significant in their Spiritual Outline, as Tholuck implies : and very confused in their Allegorical Detail, as G. de Tassy admits. Other great Sufi Doctors distinguished '*The Road*' of Self-perfection into other Stages, some more, some less in Number than Attar : but Tholuck tells us *Three* was the usual Scale of Gradation : and, one must admit, quite enough.

Vulgo tres solent majoris minorisve Perfectionis gradus Muham-medani numerare &c.—Ssufii vel pariter tres vel quatuor Gradus posuere. I Scheriat, Lex : II Terikat, Iter ; III Hakikat, Veritas, quibus adjunxerunt quartam aliqui : IV Marifat, Cognito....In Metsnewi non inveni Graduum mentionem nisi T. i. p. 72. 'Quum videas Rubrum, aliosque Colores, qui fit ut non cernas hæc tria Lumina'—Sæpius ut solet prolixè de Lege, Itinere, Veritate, Attarus cornicatur...nec tamen significat memorabile quidquam nisi quod perpetuo asserat hos Gradus se invicem quasi in Nuce continere... Sex Gradus constituerat Bajesid, caput Ruscheniorum : I Lex. II Veritas. III Scientia. IV Appropinquatio. V Junctio. VI سکونت (indwelling in God) Quies in Deo &c. Refert doctissimus D. Leyden e Dabistano edocuisse Bajesidum patrem suum quatuor a Propheta ipso Gradus positos esse &c. &c.

Tholuck's *Sufism*, Berol. 1821, p. 325 &c.

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Wherefore still Forward, Forward ! Love that
fired

Thee first to search, by Search so re-inspired
As that the Spirit shall the carnal Load
Burn up, and double wing Thee on the Road ;
That wert thou knocking at the very Door
Of Heav'n, thou still would'st cry for More,
More, More !

Till loom in sight Káf's Mountain Peak ashroud
In Mist—uncertain yet Mountain or Cloud,
But where the Pilgrim 'gins to hear the Tide
Of that one Sea in which the Sev'n subside ;
And not the Sev'n Seas only : but the sev'n
And self-enfolded Spheres of Earth and Heav'n—
Yea, the Two Worlds, that now as Pictures sleep
Upon its Surface—but when once the Deep
From its long Slumber 'gins to heave and sway—
Under that Tempest shall be swept away
With all their Phases and Phenomena :
Not senseless Matter only, but combined
With Life in all Varieties of Kind ;
Yea, ev'n the abstract Forms that Space and
Time

Men call, and Weal and Woe, Virtue and Crime,
And all the several Creeds, like those who fell
Before them, Musulman and Infidel
Shall from the Face of Being melt away,
Cancell'd and swept as Dreams before the Day.
So hast thou seen the Astrologer prepare
His mystic Table smooth of Sand, and there

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Inscribe his mystic Figures, Square, and Trine,
Circle and Pentagram, and heavenly Sign
Of Star and Planet : from whose Set and Rise,
Meeting and Difference, he prophesies ;
And, having done it, with his Finger clean
Obliterates as never they had been.

Such is when reacht the Table Land of *One*
And *Wonder* : blazing with so fierce a Sun
Of Unity that blinds while it reveals
The Universe that to a Point congeals, }
So, stunn'd with utter Revelation, reels }
The Pilgrim, when that *Double*-seeming House,
Against whose Beams he long had chafed his
Brows,

Crumbles and cracks before that Sea, whose near
And nearer Voice now overwhelms his Ear.
Till blinded, deafen'd, madden'd, drunk with
doubt

Of all within Himself as all without,
Nay, whether a *Without* there be, or not,
Or a *Within* that doubts : and if, then *what?*—
Ev'n so shall the bewilder'd Pilgrim seem
When nearest waking deepliest in Dream,
And darkest next to Dawn ; and lost what had
When *All* is found : and just when sane quite
Mad—

As one that having found the Key once more
Returns, and Lo ! he cannot find the Door
He stumbles over—So the Pilgrim stands
A moment on the Threshold—with raised Hands

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Calls to the eternal Sáki for one Draught
Of Light from the One Essence : which when
 quaff'd,
He plunges headlong in : and all is well
With him who never more returns to tell.

Such being then the Race and such the Goal,
Judge if you must not Body both and Soul
With Meditation, Watch, and Fast prepare.
For he that wastes his Body to a Hair
Shall seize the Locks of Truth : and he that prays
Good Angels in their Ministry way-lays :
And the Midnightly Watcher in the Folds
Of his own Darkness God Almighty holds.
He that would prosper here must from him strip
The World, and take the Dervish Gown and Scrip :
And as he goes must gather from all Sides
Irrelevant Ambitions, Lusts, and Prides,
Glory and Gold, and sensual Desire,
Whereof to build the fundamental Pyre
Of Self-annihilation : and cast in
All old Relations and Regards of Kin
And Country : and, the Pile with this perplex
World platform'd, from the Fables of the Next
Raise it tow'rd Culmination, with the torn
Rags and Integuments of Creeds out-worn ;
And top the giddy Summit with the Scroll
Of *Reason* that in dingy Smoke shall roll
Over the true Self-sacrifice of Soul :
(For such a Prayer was his—' Oh God, do Thou
With all my Wealth in the other World endow

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

My Friends : and with my Wealth in *this* my
Foes,
Till bankrupt in *thy* Riches I repose ! ')
Then, all the Pile completed of the Pelf
Of either World—at last throw on *Thyself*,
And with the Torch of Self-negation fire ;
And ever as the Flames rise high and higher,
With Cries of agonizing Glory still
All of that *Self* burn up that burn up will,
Leaving the Phœnix that no Fire can slay
To spring from its own Ashes kindled—nay,
Itself an inextinguishable Spark
Of Being, *now* beneath Earth-ashes dark,
Transcending these, at last *Itself* transcends
And with the One Eternal Essence blends.

The Moths had long been exiled from the Flame
They worship : so to solemn Council came,
And voted *One* of them by Lot be sent
To find their Idol. One was chosen : went.
And after a long Circuit in sheer Gloom,
Seeing, he thought, the TAPER in a Room
Flew back at once to say so. But the chief
Of *Mothistán* slighted so slight Belief,
And sent another Messenger, who flew
Up to the House, in at the window, through
The Flame itself ; and back the Message brings
With yet no sign of Conflict on his wings.
Then went a Third, who spurr'd with true
Desire,
Plunging at once into the sacred Fire,

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Folded his Wings within, till he became
One Colour and one Substance with the Flame.
He only knew the Flame who in it burn'd ;
And only He could tell who ne'er to tell return'd.

After declaring what of this declared
Must be, that all who went should be prepared,
From his high Station ceased the Tájidár—
And lo ! the Terrors that, when told afar,
Seem'd but as Shadows of a Noon-day Sun,
Now that the talkt of Thing was to be *done*,
Lengthening into those of closing Day
Strode into utter Darkness : and Dismay
Like Night on the husht Sea of Feathers lay, }
Late so elate—' So terrible a Track !
Endless—or, ending, never to come back !—
Never to Country, Family, or Friend ! '—
In sooth no easy Bow for Birds to bend !—
Even while he spoke, how many Wings and
Crests

Had slunk away to distant Woods and Nests ;
Others again in Preparation spent
What little Strength they had, and never went :
And others, after Preparation due—
When up the Veil of that first Valley drew
From whose waste Wilderness of Darkness blew }
A Sarsar, whether edged of Flames or Snows,
That through from Root to Tip their Feathers
froze—

Up went a Multitude that overhead
A moment darken'd, then on all sides fled

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

Dwindling the World-assembled Caravan
To less than half the Number that began.
Of those who fled not, some in Dread and
Doubt

Sat without stirring : others who set out
With frothy Force, or stupidly resign'd,
Before a League, flew off or fell behind.
And howsoever the more Brave and Strong
In Courage, Wing, or Wisdom push'd along,
Yet League by League the Road was thicklier
spread

By the fast falling Foliage of the Dead :
Some spent with Travel over Wave and
Ground ;

Scorcht, frozen, dead for Drought, or drinking
drown'd.

Famisht, or poison'd with the Food when
found :

By Weariness, or Hunger, or Affright
Seduced to stop or stray, become the Bite
Of Tiger howling round or hissing Snake,
Or Crocodile that eyed them from the Lake :
Or raving Mad, or in despair Self-slain :
Or slaying one another for a Grain :—

Till of the mighty Host that fledged the Dome
Of Heav'n and Floor of Earth on leaving Home,
A Handfull reach'd and scrambled up the Knees
Of Káf whose Feet dip in the Seven Seas ;
And of the few that up his Forest-sides
Of Light and Darkness where *The Presence* hides,

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

But *Thirty*—thirty desperate draggled Things,
Half-dead, with scarce a Feather on their Wings,
Stunn'd, blinded, deafen'd with the Crash and
Craze

Of Rock and Sea collapsing in a Blaze
That struck the Sun to Cinder—fell upon
The Threshold of the Everlasting *One*,
With but enough of Life in each to cry,
On *THAT* which all absorb'd—

And suddenly
Forth flash'd a wingèd Harbinger of Flame
And Tongue of Fire, and 'Who?' and 'Whence
they came?'

And 'Why?' demanded. And the *Tájidár* }
For all the *Thirty* answer'd him—'We are }
Those Fractions of the Sum of Being, far }
Dis-spent and foul disfigured, that once more
Strike for Admission at the Treasury Door.'

To whom the Angel answer'd—'Know ye not
That He you seek reck's little who or what
Of Quantity and Kind—himself the Fount
Of Being Universal needs no Count
Of all the Drops o'erflowing from his Urn,
In what Degree they issue or return?'

Then cried the Spokesman, 'Be it even so : }
Let us but see the Fount from which we flow, }
And, seeing, lose Ourselves therein !' And, Lo ! }
Before the Word was utter'd, or the Tongue
Of Fire replied, or Portal open flung,

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

They were *within*—they were before the *Throne*,
Before the Majesty that sat thereon,
But wrapt in so insufferable a Blaze
Of Glory as beat down their baffled Gaze,
Which, downward dropping, fell upon a Scroll
That, Lightning-like, flash'd back on each the
whole

Past half-forgotten Story of his Soul :
Like that which Yúsuf in his Glory gave
His Brethren as some Writing he would have
Interpreted ; and at a Glance, behold
Their own Indenture for their Brother sold !
And so with these poor Thirty : who, abasht
In Memory all laid bare and Conscience lasht,
By full Confession and Self-loathing flung
The Rags of carnal Self that round them clung ;
And, their old selves self-knowledged and self-
loathed,

And in the Soul's Integrity re-clothed,
Once more they ventured from the Dust to raise
Their Eyes—up to the Throne—into the Blaze
And in the Centre of the Glory there
Beheld the Figure of—*Themselves*¹—as 'twere
Transfigured—looking to Themselves, beheld
The Figure on the Throne en-miracled,
Until their Eyes themselves and *That* between
Did hesitate which *Sëer* was, which *Seen* ;
They That, That They : Another, yet the
Same ;

Dividual, yet One : from whom there came

¹ ' *Symurgh* ' signifies 'Thirty Birds.'

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

A Voice of awful Answer, scarce discern'd
From *which* to Aspiration *whose* return'd
They scarcely knew ; as when some Man apart
Answers aloud the Question in his Heart—
'The Sun of my Perfection is a Glass
Wherein from *Seeing* into *Being* pass
All who, reflecting as reflected see
Themselves in Me, and Me in Them : not *Me*,
But all of Me that a contracted Eye
Is comprehensive of Infinity :
Nor yet *Themselves* : no Selves, but of The All
Fractions, from which they split and whither fall.
As Water lifted from the Deep, again }
Falls back in individual Drops of Rain }
Then melts into the Universal Main. }
All you have been, and seen, and done, and
thought,
Not *You* but *I*, have seen and been and wrought :
I was the Sin that from Myself rebell'd :
I the Remorse that tow'rd Myself compell'd :
I was the Tájidár who led the Track :
I was the little Briar that pull'd you back :
Sin and Contrition—Retribution owed,
And cancell'd—Pilgrim, Pilgrimage, and Road,
Was but Myself toward Myself : and Your
Arrival but *Myself* at my own Door :
Who in your Fraction of Myself behold ¹
Myself within the Mirror Myself hold

¹ In one of Jámí's Poems, which I can now refer to only by Memory, he conceives The Deity to have *projected* Creation as a Mirror in which to behold Himself. And he adds a pretty, but, as

BIRD-PARLIAMENT

To see Myself in, and each part of Me
That sees himself, though drown'd, shall ever see.
Come you lost Atoms to your Centre draw,
And *be* the Eternal Mirror that you saw :
Rays that have wander'd into Darkness wide
Return, and back into your Sun subside."—

This was the Parliament of Birds : and this
The Story, of the Host who went amiss,
And of the Few that better Upshot found ;
Which being now recounted, Lo, the Ground
Of Speech fails underfoot : But this to tell—
Their Road is thine—Follow—and Fare thee
well.

usual, faintly illustrative, Story ; of some one who, going up from Canaan to Egypt, and wishing to carry '*Yûsuf*' the most acceptable Present he can, is counsell'd to carry *a Mirror* : in which looking, Yûsuf will see the most beautiful Object in the Universe.

THE TWO GENERALS

I.

LUCIUS ÆMILIUS PAULLUS.

*His Speech to the Roman People after his Triumph
over Perseus, King of Macedonia, A. U. C. 585.
Livy xlv. 41. (And unfaithful to the few
and simple words recorded in the Original.)*

With what success, Quirites, I have served
The Commonwealth, and, in the very hour
Of Glory, what a double Thunderbolt
From Heav'n has struck upon my private roof,
Rome needs not to be told, who lately saw
So close together treading through her streets
My Triumph, and the Funeral of my Sons.
Yet bear with me while, in a few brief words,
And uninvidious spirit, I compare
Beside the fulness of the general Joy
My single Destitution.

When the time
For leaving Italy was come, the Ships

LUCIUS ÆMILIUS PAULLUS

With all their Armament and men complete,
As the Sun rose I left Brundisium :
With all my Ships before that Sun was down
I made Corcyra : thence, within five days
To Delphi : where, Lustration to the God
Made for myself, the Army, and the Fleet,
In five days more I reach'd the Roman Camp ;
Took the Command ; redress'd what was amiss :
And, for King Perseus would not forth to fight,
And, for his Camp's strength, forth could not be
forced,

I slipp'd beside him through the Mountain-pass
To Pydna ; whither when himself forced back,
And fight he must, I fought, I routed him :
And all the War that, swelling for four years,
Consul to Consul handed over worse
Than from his Predecessor he took up,
In fifteen days victoriously I closed.
Nor stay'd my Fortune here. Upon Success
Success came rolling : with their Army lost,
The Macedonian Cities all gave in ;
Into my hands the Royal Treasure then—
And, by and by, the King's self and his Sons,
As by the very finger of the Gods
Betray'd, whose Temple they had fled to—fell.
And now my swollen Fortune to myself
Became suspicious : I began to dread
The seas that were to carry such a freight
Of Conquest, and of Conquerors. But when
With all-propitious Wind and Wave we reach'd
Italian Earth again, and all was done

LUCIUS ÆMILIUS PAULLUS

That was to be, and nothing furthermore
To deprecate or pray for—still I pray'd ;
That, whereas human Fortune, having touch'd
The destined height it may not rise beyond,
Forthwith begins as fatal a decline,
Its Fall might but myself and mine involve,
Swerving beside my Country. Be it so !
By my sole sacrifice may jealous Fate
Absolve the Public ; and by such a Triumph
As, in derision of all Human Glory,
Began and closed with those two Funerals.
Yes, at that hour were Perseus and myself
Together two notorious monuments
Standing of Human Instability :
He that was late so absolute a King,
Now Bondsman, and his Sons along with him
Still living Trophies of my Conquest led ;
While I, the Conqueror, scarce had turn'd my
face
From one still unextinguisht Funeral,
And from my Triumph to the Capitol
Return—return to close the dying Eyes
Of the last Son I yet might call my own,
Last of all those who should have borne my name
To after Ages down. For ev'n as one
Presuming on a rich Posterity,
And blind to Fate, my two surviving Sons
Into two noble Families of Rome
I had adopted—
And Paullus is the last of all his Name.

II.

SIR CHARLES NAPIER

(Writing home after the Battle of Meeanee)

(*See his Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 429)

[Leaving the Battle to be fought again
Over the wine with all our friends at home,
I needs must tell, before my letter close,
Of one result that you will like to hear.]

The Officers who under my command
Headed and led the British Troops engaged
In this last Battle that decides the War,
Resolved to celebrate the Victory
With those substantial Honours that, you know,
So much good English work begins and ends with.
Resolved by one and all, the day was named ;
One mighty Tent, with ' room and verge enough '
To hold us all, of many Tents made up
Under the very walls of Hydrabad,
And then and there were they to do me honour.
Some of them grizzled Veterans like myself :

SIR CHARLES NAPIER

Some scorcht with Indian Sun and Service ; some
With unrecover'd wound or sickness pale ;
And some upon whose boyish cheek the rose
They brought with them from England scarce
had faded.

Imagine these in all varieties
Of Uniform, Horse, Foot, Artillery,
Ranged down the gaily decorated Tent,
Each with an Indian servant at his back,
Whose dusky feature, Oriental garb,
And still, but supple, posture of respect
Served as a foil of contrast to the lines
Of animated English Officers.
Over our heads our own victorious Colours
Festoon'd with those wrencht from the Indian
hung,

While through the openings of the tent were seen
Darkling the castle walls of Hydrabad ;
And, further yet, the monumental Towers
Of the Kalloras and Talpoors ; and yet
Beyond, and last,—the Field of Meeanee.
Yes, there in Triumph as upon the tombs
Of two extinguisht Dynasties we sate,
Beside the field of blood we quench'd them in.
And I, chief Actor in that Scene of Death,
And foremost in the passing Triumph—I,
Veteran in Service as in years, though now
First call'd to play the General—I myself
So swiftly disappearing from the stage
Of all this world's transaction !—As I sate,
My thoughts reverted to that setting Sun

SIR CHARLES NAPIER

That was to rise on our victorious march ;
When from a hillock by my tent alone
I look'd down over twenty thousand Men
Husht in the field before me, like a Fire
Prepared, and waiting but my breath to blaze.
And now, methought, the Work is done ; is done,
And well ; for those who died, and those who live
To celebrate our common Glory, well ;
And, looking round, I whisper'd to myself—
' These are my Children—these whom I have led
Safe through the Vale of Death to Victory,
And in a righteous cause ; righteous, I say,
As for our Country's welfare, so for this,
Where from henceforth Peace, Order, Industry,
Blasted and trampled under heretofore
By every lawless Ruffian of the Soil,
Shall now strike root, and '—I was running on
With all that was to be, when suddenly
My Name was call'd ; the glass was fill'd ; all
 rose ;
And, as they pledged me cheer on cheer, the
 Cannon
Roar'd it abroad, with each successive burst
Of Thunder lighting up the banks now dark
Of Indus, which at Inundation-height,
Beside the Tent we revell'd in roll'd down
Audibly growling—' But a hand-breadth higher,
And whose the Land you boast as all your own ! '

BREDFIELD HALL

Lo, an English mansion founded
In the elder James's reign,
Quaint and stately, and surrounded
With a pastoral domain.

With well-timber'd lawn and gardens
And with many a pleasant mead,
Skirted by the lofty coverts
Where the hare and pheasant feed.

Flank'd it is with goodly stables,
Shelter'd by coeval trees :
So it lifts its honest gables
Toward the distant German seas ;

Where it once discern'd the smoke
Of old sea-battles far away :
Saw victorious Nelson's topmasts
Anchoring in Hollesley Bay.

BREDFIELD HALL

But whatever storm might riot,
Cannon roar, and trumpet ring,
Still amid these meadows quiet
Did the yearly violet spring :

Still Heaven's starry hand suspended
That light balance of the dew,
That each night on earth descended,
And each morning rose anew :

And the ancient house stood rearing
Undisturb'd her chimneys high,
And her gilded vanes still veering
Toward each quarter of the sky :

While like wave to wave succeeding
Through the world of joy and strife,
Household after household speeding
Handed on the torch of life :

First, sir Knight in ruff and doublet,
Arm in arm with stately dame ;
Then the Cavaliers indignant
For their monarch brought to shame :

Languid beauties limn'd by Lely ;
Full-wigg'd Justice of Queen Anne :
Tory squires who tippled freely ;
And the modern Gentleman :

BREDFIELD HALL

Here they lived, and here they greeted,
Maids and matrons, sons and sires,
Wandering in its walks, or seated
Round its hospitable fires :

Oft their silken dresses floated
Gleaming through the pleasure ground :
Oft dash'd by the scarlet-coated
Hunter, horse, and dappled hound.

Till the Bell that not in vain
Had summon'd them to weekly prayer,
Call'd them one by one again
To the church—and left them there !

They with all their loves and passions,
Compliment, and song, and jest,
Politics, and sports, and fashions,
Merged in everlasting rest !

So they pass—while thou, old Mansion,
Markest with unalter'd face
How like the foliage of thy summers
Race of man succeeds to race.

To most thou stand'st a record sad,
But all the sunshine of the year
Could not make thine aspect glad
To one whose youth is buried here.

BREDFIELD HALL

In thine ancient rooms and gardens
Buried—and his own no more
Than the youth of those old owners,
Dead two centuries before.

Unto him the fields around thee
Darken with the days gone by :
O'er the solemn woods that bound thee
Ancient sunsets seem to die.

Sighs the selfsame breeze of morning
Through the cypress as of old ;
Ever at the Spring's returning
One same crocus breaks the mould.

Still though 'scaping Time's more savage
Handywork this pile appears,
It has not escaped the ravage
Of the undermining years.

And though each succeeding master,
Grumbling at the cost to pay,
Did with coat of paint and plaster
Hide the wrinkles of decay ;

Yet the secret worm ne'er ceases,
Nor the mouse behind the wall ;
Heart of oak will come to pieces,
And farewell to Bredfield Hall !

BREDFIELD HALL

These verses on his old home were written originally by Fitzgerald as early as 1839, and communicated to Bernard Barton. They were circulated in slightly differing forms among his friends, and probably never received the final touches of his hand, but they contain what, Professor Cowell informs me, were in his own judgment the best lines he had ever written, as shewing real imagination, and it seems better to print them though imperfect. In reply to an old friend, who had heard some of the lines quoted and supposed them to be from Tennyson, he wrote : ' I was astonisht to find I had three sheets to fold up ; and now one half "cheer" more, only to prevent you wasting any more trouble in looking through Tennyson for those verses—I myself having been puzzled at first to what you alluded by that single line. No : *I* wrote them along with many others about my old home more than forty years ago, and they recur to me also as I wander about the Garden or the Lawn. Therefore I suppose there is some native force about them, though your referring them to A. T. proves that I was echoing him.'

CHRONOMOROS

In all the actions that a Man performs, some part of his life passeth. We die with doing that, for which only our sliding life was granted. Nay, though we do nothing, Time keeps his constant pace, and flies as fast in idlenesse, as in employment. Whether we play or labour, or sleep, or dance, or study, THE SUNNE POSTETH, AND THE SAND RUNNES.—OWEN FELLTHAM.

WEARIED with hearing folks cry,
That Time would incessantly fly,
Said I to myself, 'I don't see
Why Time should not wait upon me ;
I will not be carried away,
Whether I like it, or nay : '—

But ere I go on with my strain,
Pray turn me that hour-glass again !

I said, 'I will read, and will write,
And labour all day, and all night,
And Time will so heavily load,
That he cannot but wait on the road ; '—
But I found, that, balloon-like in size,
The more fill'd, the faster he flies ;
And I could not the trial maintain,
Without turning the hour-glass again !

CHRONOMOROS

Then said I, ' If Time has so flown
When laden, I'll leave him alone ;
And I think that he cannot but stay,
When he's nothing to carry away !'
So I sat, folding my hands,
Watching the mystical sands,
As they fell, grain after grain,
Till I turn'd up the hour-glass again !

Then I cried, in a rage, ' Time *shall* stand !'
The hour-glass I smash'd with my hand,
My watch into atoms I broke
And the sun-dial hid with a cloak !
' Now,' I shouted aloud, ' Time is done !'
When suddenly, down went the Sun ;
And I found to my cost and my pain,
I might buy a new hour-glass again !

Whether we wake, or we sleep,
Whether we carol, or weep,
The Sun, with his Planets in chime,
Marketh the going of Time ;
But Time, in a still better trim,
Marketh the going of him :
One link in an infinite chain,
Is this turning the hour-glass again !

The robes of the Day and the Night,
Are not wove of mere darkness and light ;

CHRONOMOROS

We read that, at Joshua's will,
The Sun for a Time once stood still !
So that Time by his measure to try,
Is *Petitio Principii* !
 Time's Scythe is going amain,
 Though he turn not his hour-glass again !

And yet, after all, what is Time ?
Renowned in Reason, and Rhyme,
A Phantom, a Name, a Notion,
That measures Duration or Motion ?
Or but an apt term in the lease
Of Beings, who know they must cease ?
 The hand utters more than the brain,
 When turning the hour-glass again !

The King in a carriage may ride,
And the Beggar may crawl at his side ;
But, in the general race,
They are travelling all the same pace,
And houses, and trees, and high-way,
Are in the same gallop as they :
 We mark our steps in the train,
 When turning the hour-glass again !

People complain, with a sigh,
How terribly Chroniclers lie ;
But there is one pretty right,
Heard in the dead of the night,

CHRONOMOROS

Calling aloud to the people,
Out of St. Dunstan's Steeple,
Telling them under the vane,
To turn their hour-glasses again !

MORAL.

Masters ! we live here for ever,
Like so many fish in a river ;
We may mope, tumble, or glide,
And eat one another beside ;
But, whithersoever we go,
The River will flow, flow, flow !
And now, that I've ended my strain,
Pray turn me that hour-glass again !

VIRGIL'S GARDEN

Laid out à la Delille.

‘There is more pleasantness in the little platform of a Garden which he gives us about the middle of this Book’ (‘Georgick’ IV. 115—148) ‘than in all the spacious Walks and Waterfalls of Monsieur Rapin.’—Dryden; two of whose lines are here marked by inverted commas.

BUT that, my destined voyage almost done,
I think to slacken sail and shoreward run,
I would enlarge on that peculiar care
Which makes the Garden bloom, the Orchard
 bear,
Pampers the Melon into girth, and blows
Twice to one summer the Calabrian Rose :
Nor many a shrub with flower and berries hung,
Nor Myrtle of the seashore¹ leave unsung.

‘For where the Tower of old Tarentum
 stands,
And dark Galesus soaks the yellow sands,’

¹ Mitford says that it abounds on the coast of Calabria.

VIRGIL'S GARDEN

I mind me of an old Corycian swain,
Who from a plot of disregarded plain,
That neither Corn, nor Vine, nor Olive grew,
Yet such a store of garden-produce drew
That made him rich in heart as Kings with all
Their wealth, when he returned at even-fall,
And from the conquest of the barren ground
His table with unpurchased plenty crown'd.
For him the Rose first open'd ; his, somehow,
The first ripe Apple redden'd on the bough ;
Nay, even when melancholy Winter still
Congeal'd the glebe, and check'd the wandering
rill,

The sturdy veteran might abroad be seen,
With some first slip of unexpected green,
Upbraiding Nature with her tardy Spring,
And those south winds so late upon the wing.
He sow'd the seed ; and, under Sun and
Shower,

Up came the Leaf, and after it the Flower,
From which no busier bees than his derived
More, or more honey for their Master hived :
Under his skilful hand no savage root
But sure to thrive with its adopted shoot ;
No sapling but, transplanted, sure to grow,
Sizable standards set in even row ;
Some for their annual crop of fruit, and some
For longer service in the years to come ;
While his young Plane already welcome made
The guest who came to drink beneath the
shade.

VIRGIL'S GARDEN

But, by the stern conditions of my song
Compell'd to leave where I would linger long,
To other bards the Garden I resign
Who with more leisure step shall follow mine.

FROM PETRARCH

(Se la mia vita dall' aspro tormento.)

IF it be destined that my Life, from thine
Divided, yet with thine shall linger on
Till, in the later twilight of Decline,
I may behold those Eyes, their lustre gone ;
When the gold tresses that enrich thy brow
Shall all be faded into silver-gray,
From which the wreaths that well bedeck them
now
For many a Summer shall have fall'n away :
Then should I dare to whisper in your ears
The pent-up Passion of so long ago,
That Love which hath survived the wreck of
years
Hath little else to pray for, or bestow,
Thou wilt not to the broken heart deny
The boon of one too-late relenting Sigh.

OCCASIONAL VERSES

THROUGH the kindness of the late Mr. Thomas Allen I was enabled to recover the missing stanzas about Clora referred to in the Letters of Edward FitzGerald, i. 19, and with them some other verses by the same pen, hitherto unknown to me. Of these I printed privately twenty-five copies in February 1891.

TO A LADY SINGING.

Canst thou, my Clora, declare,
After thy sweet song dieth
Into the wild summer air,
Whither it falleth or flieth ?
Soon would my answer be noted,
Wert thou but sage as sweet throated.

Melody, dying away,
Into the dark sky closes,
Like the good soul from her clay
Like the fair odour of roses :

OCCASIONAL VERSES

Therefore thou now art behind it,
But thou shalt follow, and find it.

Nothing can utterly die ;
Music, aloft upspringing,
Turns to pure atoms of sky
Each golden note of thy singing :
And that to which morning did listen
At eve in a Rainbow may glisten.

Beauty, when laid in the grave,
Feedeth the lily beside her,
Therefore the soul cannot have
Station or honour denied her ;
She will not better her essence,
But wear a crown in God's presence.

[ON ANNE ALLEN.¹]

I.

THE wind blew keenly from the Western sea,
And drove the dead leaves slanting from the tree—
Vanity of vanities, the Preacher saith—
Heaping them up before her Father's door
When I saw her whom I shall see no more—
We cannot bribe thee, Death.

¹ See Letters, i. 85. She died in the autumn of 1833, the year after FitzGerald had seen her at Tenby.

OCCASIONAL VERSES

2

She went abroad the falling leaves among,
She saw the merry season fade, and sung
 Vanity of vanities, the Preacher saith—
Freely she wander'd in the leafless wood,
And said that all was fresh, and fair, and good,
 She knew thee not, O Death.

3

She bound her shining hair across her brow,
She went into the garden fading now ;
 Vanity of vanities, the Preacher saith—
And if one sigh'd to think that it was sere,
She smiled to think that it would bloom next
 year :
 She fear'd thee not, O Death.

4

Blooming she came back to the cheerful room
With all the fairer flowers yet in bloom,
 Vanity of vanities, the Preacher saith—
A fragrant knot for each of us she tied,
And placed the fairest at her Father's side—
 She cannot charm thee, Death.

5

Her pleasant smile spread sunshine upon all ;
We heard her sweet clear laughter in the Hall ;—

OCCASIONAL VERSES

Vanity of vanities, the Preacher saith—
We heard her sometimes after evening prayer,
As she went singing softly up the stair—
No voice can charm thee, Death.

6

Where is the pleasant smile, the laughter kind,
That made sweet music of the winter wind ?

Vanity of vanities, the Preacher saith—
Idly they gaze upon her empty place,
Her kiss hath faded from her Father's face ;—
She is with thee, O Death

[TO A VIOLET.]

FAIR violet ! sweet saint !
Answer us—Whither art thou gone ?
Ever thou wert so still, and faint,
And fearing to be look'd upon.
We cannot say that one hath died,
Who wont to live so unespied,
But crept away unto a stiller spot,
Where men may stir the grass, and find thee not.

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

[1852.]

FEW books are duller than books of Aphorisms and Apophthegms. A Jest-book is, proverbially, no joke ; a Wit-book, perhaps, worse ; but dullest of all, probably, is the Moral-book, which this little volume pretends to be. So with men : the Jester, the Wit, and the Moralist, each wearisome in proportion as each deals exclusively in his one commodity. 'Too much of one thing,' says Fuller, 'is good for nothing.'

Bacon's 'Apophthegms' seem to me the best collection of many men's sayings ; the greatest variety of wisdom, good sense, wit, humour, and even simple 'naïveté,' (as one must call it for want of a native word,) all told in a style whose dignity and antiquity (together with perhaps our secret consciousness of the gravity and even tragic greatness of the narrator) add a particular humour to the lighter stories.

Johnson said Selden's Table-talk was worth all the French 'Ana' together. Here also we

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

find wit, humour, fancy, and good sense alternating, something as one has heard in some scholarly English gentleman's after-dinner talk—the best English common-sense in the best common English. It outlives, I believe, all Selden's books; and is probably much better, collected even imperfectly by another, than if he had put it together himself.

What would become of Johnson if Boswell had not done as much for his talk? If the Doctor himself, or some of his more serious admirers, had recorded it!

And (leaving alone Epictetus, à Kempis, and other Moral aphorists) most of the collections of this nature I have seen, are made up mainly from Johnson and the Essayists of the last century, his predecessors and imitators; when English thought and language had lost so much of their vigour, freshness, freedom, and picturesqueness—so much, in short, of their native character, under the French polish that came in with the second Charles. When one lights upon, 'He who'—'The man who'—'Of all the virtues that adorn the breast'—&c.,—one is tempted to swear, with Sir Peter Teazle, against all '*sentiment*,' and shut the book. How glad should we be to have Addison's Table-talk as we have Johnson's! and how much better are Spence's Anecdotes of Pope's Conversation than Pope's own letters!

If a scanty reader could, for the use of yet scantier readers than himself, put together a few

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

sentences of the wise, and also of the less wise,—(and Tom Tyers said a good thing or two in his day,¹)—from Plato, Bacon, Rochefoucauld, Goethe, Carlyle, and others,—a little Truth, new or old, each after his kind—nay, of Truism too, (into which all truth must ultimately be dog-seared,) and which, perhaps, ‘the wit of one, and the wisdom of many,’ has preserved in the shape of some nameless and dateless Proverbs which yet ‘retain life and vigour,’ and widen into new relations with the widening world—

Not a book of *Beauties*—other than as all who have the best to tell, have also naturally the best way of telling it; nor of the ‘limbs and outward flourishes’ of Truth, however eloquent; but in general, and as far as I understand, of clear, decided, wholesome, and available insight into our nature and duties. ‘Brevity is the soul of *Wit*,’ in a far wider sense than as we now use the word. ‘As the centre of the greatest circle,’ says Sir Edward Coke, ‘is but a little prick, so the matter of even the biggest business lies in a little room.’ So the ‘Sentences of the Seven’ are said to be epitomes of whole systems of philo-

¹ ‘Tom Tyers,’ said Johnson, ‘describes me best, “a ghost who never speaks till spoken to.” Another sentence in Tom’s “Resolutions” still remains in my memory, “Mem.—to think more of the living and less of the dead; for the dead have a world of their own.”’ Tom was the original of Tom Restless in the Rambler, a literary gossip about London in those days, author of Anecdotes of Pope, Addison, Johnson, &c. Johnson used to say of him, ‘I never see Tom but he tells me something I did not know before.’

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

sophy : which also Carlyle says is the case with many a homely proverb. Anyhow that famous *Μηδὲν ἄγαν*, the boundary law of Goodness itself, as of all other things, (if one could only know how to apply it,) brings one up with a wholesome halt every now and then, and no where more fitly than in a book of this kind, though, as usual, I am just now violating in the very act of vindicating it.¹

The grand Truisms of life only life itself is said to bring to life. We hear them from grandam and nurse, write them in copy-books,

¹ These oracular Truisms are some of them as impracticable as more elaborate Truths. Who will do 'too much' if he knows it *is* 'too much?' 'Know thyself' is far easier said than done; and might not a passage like the following make one suppose Shakspeare had Bacon in his eye as the original Polonius, if the dates tallied?

'He that seeketh victory over his nature, let him not set himself too great, nor too small, tasks; for the first will make him dejected by often failings, and the second will make him a small proceeder though by often prevailings. And at the first let him practise with helps, as swimmers do with bladders or rushes; but after a time let him practise with disadvantages, as dancers do with thick shoes. For it breeds great perfection if the practice be harder than the use. Where nature is mighty, and therefore the victory hard, the degrees had need be, first, to stay and arrest nature in time: like to him that would say over the four and twenty letters when he was angry; then to go less in quantity, as if one should, in forbearing wine, come from drinking healths to a draught at a meal," &c. [Essay 38.]

If all chance of controlling nature depended on advice like this! What *is* too great for a man's nature?—what too little? what *are* bladders, and what thick shoes? *when* is one to throw off one and take the other? He was a more effectual philosopher who thought of repeating the alphabet when he was angry; though it is not every man who knows when he is that.

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

but only understand them as years turn up occasions for practising or experiencing them. Nay, the longest and most eventful life scarce suffices to teach us the most important of all. It is Death, says Sir Walter Raleigh, 'that puts into a man all the wisdom of the world without speaking a word.' Only when we have to part with a thing do we feel its value—unless indeed *after* we have parted with it—a very serious consideration.

When Sir Walter Scott lay dying, he called for his son-in-law, and while the Tweed murmured through the woods, and a September sun lit up the towers, whose growth he had watched so eagerly, said to him, 'Be a good man; only that can comfort you when you come to lie here!' '*Be a good man!*' To that threadbare Truism shrunk all that gorgeous tapestry of written and real Romance!

'You knew all this,' wrote Johnson to Mrs. Thrale, rallying for a little while from his final attack—'You knew all this, and I thought that I knew it too: but I know it now with a new conviction.'

Perhaps, next to realizing all this in our own lives, (when just too late,) we become most sensible of it in reading the lives and deaths of others, such as Scott's and Johnson's; when we see all the years of life, with all their ambitions, loves, animosities, schemes of action—all the 'curas supervacuas, spes inanes, et inexpectatos

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

exitus hujus fugacissimæ vitæ ¹—summed up in a volume or two ; and what seemed so long a history to them, but a Winter's Tale to us.

Death itself was no Truism to Adam and Eve, nor to many of their successors, I suppose ; nay, some of their very latest descendants, it is said, have doubted if it be an inevitable necessity of life : others, with more probability, whether a man can fully comprehend its inevitableness till life itself be half over ; beginning to believe he must Die about the same time he begins to believe he is a Fool.

‘As are the leaves on the trees, even so are man’s generations ;
This is the truest verse ever a poet has sung :
Nevertheless few hearing it hear ; Hope, flattering away,
Lives in the bosom of all—reigns in the blood of the Young.’

‘And why,’ says the note-book of one ‘*nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*,’ ‘does one day still linger in my memory ? I had started one fine October morning on a ramble through the villages that lie beside the Ouse. In high health and cloudless spirits, one regret perhaps hanging upon the horizon of the heart, I walked through Sharnbrook up the hill, and paused by the church on the summit to look about me. The sun shone, the clouds flew, the yellow trees shook in the wind, the river rippled in breadths of light and dark ; rooks and daws wheeled and cawed aloft in the changing spaces of blue above

¹ [See Petrarch's Inscription in his *Virgil*.]

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

the spire ; the churchyard all still in the sunshine below.'

Old Shallow was not very sensible of Death even when moralizing about old Double's—'Certain, 'tis very certain, Death, as the Psalmist saith, is certain to all—all shall die—How a good yoke of bullocks at Stamford fair?'

Could we but on our journey hear the Truisms of life called out to us, not by Chapone, Cogan, &c., but by such a voice as called out to Sir Lancelot and Sir Galahad, when they were about to part in the forest—'Thynke for to doo wel ; for the one shall never see the other before the dredeful day of dome !'

Our ancestors were fond of such monitory Truisms inscribed upon dials, clocks, and fronts of buildings ; as that of 'Time and Tide tarry for no man,' still to be seen on the Temple sundial ; and that still sterner one I have read of 'Go about your business'¹—not even moralizing upon me. I dare say those who came suddenly and unaware upon the *Γνώθι Σεαυτόν* over the Delphian temple were brought to a stand for a while, some thrown back into themselves by it, others (and those probably much the greater number) seeing nothing at all in it.

The parapet balustrade round the roof of Castle Ashby, in Northamptonshire, is carved into the letters, 'NISI DOMINUS CUSTODIAT DOMUM, FRUSTRA VIGILAT QUI CUSTODIT EAM.'

¹ [On St. James's Church, Bury St. Edmunds.]

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

This is not amiss to decipher as you come up the long avenue some summer or autumn day, and to moralize upon afterwards at the little 'Rose and Crown' at Yardley, if such good Homebrewed be there as used to be before I knew I was to die.¹

We move away the grass from a tombstone, itself half buried, to get at any trite memento of mortality, where it preaches more to us than many new volumes of hot-pressed morals. Not but we can feel the warning whisper too, when Jeremy Taylor tells us that one day the bell shall toll, and it shall be asked, 'For whom?' and answered, 'For *us*.'

Some of these Truisms come home to us also in the shape of old Proverbs, quickened by wit, fancy, rhyme, alliteration, &c. These have been well defined to be 'the Wit of one and the Wisdom of many;' and are in some measure therefore historical indexes of the nation that originates or retains them. Our English Proverbs

¹ 'A party of us were looking one autumn afternoon at a country church. Over the western door was a clock with, "THE HOUR COMETH," written in gold, upon it. Polonius proceeded to explain, rather lengthily, what a good inscription it was. "But not very apposite," said Rosencrantz, "seeing the clock has stopped." The sun was indeed setting, and the hands of the clock, glittering full in his face, pointed up to noon. Osric however, with a slight lisp, said the inscription was all the more apt, "for the hour *would* come to the clock, instead of the clock following the hour." On which Horatio, taking out his watch, (which he informed us was just then more correct than the sun,) told us that unless we set off home directly we should be late for dinner. That was one way of considering an Inscription.'

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

abound with good sense, energy, and courage, as compactly expressed as may be; making them properly enough the ready money of a people more apt to act than talk. 'They drive the nail home in discourse,' says Ray, 'and clench it with the strongest conviction.'

A thoughtful Frenchman says that nearly all which expresses any decided opinion has '*quelque chose de métrique, ou de mesure.*' So as even so bare-faced a truism as 'Of two evils choose the least,' (superfluous reason, and no rhyme at all!) is not without its secret poetic charm. How much vain hesitation has it not cut short?

So that if Cogan and Chapone had not been made poetical by the gods, but only brief—

Sometimes indeed our old friend the Proverb gets too much clipt in his course of circulation: as in the case of that very important business to all Englishmen, a Cold—'*STUFF A COLD AND STARVE A FEVER,*' has been grievously misconstrued, so as to bring on the fever it was meant to prevent.

Certainly Dr. Johnson (who could hit hard too) not only did not always drive the nail home, but made it a nail of wax, which Fuller truly says you can't drive at all. 'These sorrowful meditations,' the Doctor says of Prince Rasselas, 'fastened on his mind; he passed four months in resolving to lose no more time in idle resolves; and was awakened to more vigorous exertion by hearing a maid, who had broken a porcelain cup,

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

remark that "what cannot be repaired is not to be regretted."

But perhaps this was a Maid of Honour. If so, however, it proves that Maids of Honour of Rasselas' court did not talk like those of George the Second's. Witness jolly Mary Bellenden's letters to Lady Suffolk.

Swift has a fashionable dialogue almost made up of vulgar adages, which I should have thought the Beaux and Belles left to the Mary Bellendens and Country Squires of his day—

'Grounding their fat faiths on old country proverbs.'

Nor do I see any trace of it in the comedies of Congreve, Vanbrugh, &c.¹

Erasmus says that the Proverb is 'a nonnullis Græcorum,' thus defined, λόγος ὠφέλιμος ἐν τῷ βίῳ,

¹ I find in my 'Complete Correspondent,' which seems begotten by Dr. Johnson on Miss Seward, the following advice about Proverbs. 'STYLE. Vulgarity in language is a proof either of a mean education, or of associating with low company. Coarse Proverbial expressions furnish such with their choicest flowers of rhetoric. Instead of saying, "Necessity compelled," such an one would say, "Needs must when the devil drives." Such vulgar aphorisms ought specially to be rejected as border upon profaneness. A good writer would not say, "It was all through you it happened," but "It happened through your inattention." &c.

This elegance of style however does not always mend the matter; as we read in Boswell that Dr. Johnson, having set the company laughing by saying of some lady in the good English so natural to him, 'She's good at bottom,' tried to make them grave again by, 'What's the laugh for? I say the woman is fundamentally good.'

The following is one of Punch's jokes; I do not know if true of the author referred to—not true, I should suppose, of the class to which he belongs, (except as regards the foolish and vulgar use of

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

ἐν μετρίᾳ παρακρύψει πολλὸν τὸ χρήσιμον ἔχων ἐν ἑαυτῷ.
The definition, it might seem at first, rather of a Fable, or Parable, than a Proverb. But, beside that the titles of many fables *do* become proverbs—‘Fox and Grapes,’ ‘Dog in Manger,’ &c., the title including the whole signification, (like those ‘Sentences of the Seven,’)—so many of our best proverbs *are* little whole fables in themselves; as when we say, ‘The Fat sow knows not what the Lean one thinks,’ &c.

We are fantastic, histrionic creatures; having so much of the fool, loving a mixture of the lie, loving to get our fellow-creatures into our scrapes and make them play our parts—the Ass of our dulness, the Fox of our cunning, and so on—in whose several natures those of our Neighbours, as we think, come to a climax. Certainly, swollen Wealth is well enacted by the fat Sow

French)—but very true of the Hammersmith education, of which my complete Letter-writer—Correspondent, I mean—is an exponent.

DESULTORY REFLECTIONS.

BY LORD WILLIAM LENNOX.

INQUIROUS intercourses contaminate proper habits.

One individual may pilfer a quadruped, where another may not cast his eyes over the boundary of a field.

In the absence of the feline race, the mice give themselves up to various pastimes.

Feathered bipeds of advanced age are not to be entrapped with the outer husks of corn.

Casualties will take place in the most excellently conducted family circles.

More confectioners than are absolutely necessary are apt to ruin the *potage*.—LENNOX’S *Lacon*.

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

reclining in her sty, as a Dowager in an opera-box, serenely unconscious of all her kindred's leanness without. The phrase 'rolling in wealth' too suggests the same fable.

Indeed, is not every Metaphor (without which we cannot speak five words) in some sort a Fable—one thing spoken of under the likeness of another? And how easy (if need were) it is to dramatize, for instance, Bacon's figure of discovering the depth, not by looking on the surface ever so long, but beginning to *sound* it!

And are these Fables so fabulous after all? If beasts do not really rise to the level on which we amuse ourselves by putting them, we have an easy way of really sinking to theirs. It is no fable surely that Circe *bodily* transformed the captives of Sensuality into apes, hogs, and goats; as Cunning, Hypocrisy, and Rapacity, graft us with the sharp noses, sidelong eyes, and stealthy gait, of wolves, hyænas, foxes, and serpents; sometimes, as in old fable too, the misfeatures and foul expressions of two baser animal passions—as lust and cunning for instance, with perhaps cruelty beside—conforming man into a double or triple monster, more hideous than any single beast. On the other hand, our more generous dispositions determine outwardly into the large aspect of the lion, or the horse's speaking eye and inspired nostril. 'There are innumerable animals to which man may degrade his image, inward and outward; only a few to which he

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

can properly (and that in the Affections only) level it : but it is an ideal and invisible type to which he must erect it.'

'Such kind of parabolical wisdom,' says Bacon, 'was much more in use in the ancient times, as by the Fables of Æsop, and the brief Sentences of the Seven, and the use of hieroglyphics may appear. And the cause was, for that it was then of necessity to express any point of reason which was more sharp or subtle than the vulgar in that manner, because men in those times wanted both variety of examples and subtlety of conceit ; and as Hieroglyphics were before letters, so Parables were before arguments.'

We cannot doubt that Christianity itself made way by means of such Parables as never were uttered before or after. Imagine (be it with reverence) that Jeremy Bentham had had the promulgation of it !

And as this figurative teaching was best for simple people, 'even now,' adds Bacon, 'such Parables do retain much life and vigour, because Reason cannot be so sensible, nor examples so fit.' Next to the Bible parables, I believe John Bunyan remains the most effective preacher, among the poor, to this day.

Nor is it only simple matters for simple people that admit such illustration.¹ Again, Bacon says, 'It is a rule that whatsoever science is not

¹ Fable might be made to exemplify the syllogism, but not to illustrate it. 'The Lion swore he would eat all flesh that came in

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

consonant to presuppositions must pray in aid of Similitudes.' 'Neither Philosopher nor Historiographer,' says Sir Philip Sidney, 'could at the first have entered into the gates of popular judgments, if they had not taken a great Passport of Poetry,' which deals so in Similitudes. 'For he' (the poet) 'doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes, that, full of that taste, you may long to pass further.'

Who can doubt that Plato wins us to his Wisdom by that skin and body of Poetry in which Sir Philip declares his philosophy is clothed? Not the sententious oracle of one wise man, but evolved dramatically by many like ourselves. The scene opens in Old Athens, which his genius continues for us for ever new; the morning dawns; a breeze from the Ægæan flutters upon our foreheads; the rising sun tips

his way. One day he set his paw on a Polecat: the Polecat pleaded that he was small, ill-flavoured, &c.; but the Lion said, "I have sworn to eat all flesh that came in my way: you are flesh come in my way; therefore I will eat you." The syllogism is proved; but the speakers do not illustrate, but obscure it, because it is a matter of *understanding*, of which no animal but man is the representative. Your Lion, noble beast as he is, is only to be trusted with an Enthymeme. One sees this fault in the Eastern fables. Birds and beasts are made to *reason*, instead of representing the passions and affections they really share with men. This also is the vital fault of Dryden's Hind and Panther.

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

the friezes of the Parthenon, and gradually slants upon the house in whose yet twilight courts gather a company of white-vested, whispering guests, 'expecting till that fountain of wisdom,' Protagoras, should arise.

Carlyle notices, as one of Goethe's chief gifts, 'his emblematic intellect, his never-failing tendency to transform into *shape*, into *life*, the feeling that may dwell in him. Every thing has *form*, has visual existence ; the poet's imagination *bodies forth* the forms of things unseen, and his pen turns them into shape.' The same is, I believe, remarkable, probably *too* remarkable, in Richter : and is especially characteristic of Carlyle himself, who to a figurative genius, like Goethe's, adds a passion which Goethe either had not or chose to suppress, which brands the truth double-deep. And who can doubt that Bacon, could it possibly have been his own, would have clothed Bentham's bare argument with cloth of gold ?

He says again, 'Reasons plainly delivered, and always after one manner, especially with fine and fastidious minds, enter heavily and dully ; whereas, if they be varied, and have more life and vigour put into them by these forms and imaginations, they carry a stronger apprehension, and many times win the mind to a resolution.' Which, if it be true in any matter, most of all surely in morals, for the most part so old, so trite, and, in this naughty world, so dull. Are

PREFACE TO POLONIUS

not *all* minds grown 'fine and fastidious' in these matters, apt to close against any but the most musical voice?

Which also (to join the snake's head and tail of this rambling overgrown Preface) may account, rightly or wrongly, for my rejection of those essayists aforesaid, (who crippled their native genius by a style which has left them 'more of the ballast than the sail,') and my adoption of earlier and later writers. Not, as I said before, in copious draughts of their eloquence—and what pages of Bacon and Browne it is far easier to bear than forbear!—but where the writer has gone to the heart of a matter, the centre of the circle, hit the nail on the head and driven it home—Proverb-wise, in fact. For in proportion as any writer tells the truth, and tells it figuratively or poetically, and yet so as to lie in a nutshell, he cuts up sooner or later into proverbs shorter or longer, and gradually gets down into general circulation.

Some extracts are from note-books, where the author's name was forgot; some from the conversation of friends that must alike remain anonymous; and some that glance but lightly at the truth are not without purpose inserted to relieve a book of dogmatic morals. 'Durum et durum non faciunt murum.'

And now Mountain opens and discovers—

POLONIUS.

INTRODUCTION TO READINGS IN CRABBE

‘TALES OF THE HALL,’ says the Poet’s son and biographer, occupied his father during the years 1817, 1818, and were published by John Murray in the following year under the present title, which he suggested, instead of that of ‘Remembrances,’ which had been originally proposed.

The plan and nature of the work is thus described by the author himself in a letter written to his old friend, Mary Leadbeater, and dated October 30, 1817 :

‘I know not how to describe the new, and probably (most probably) the last work I shall publish. Though a village is the scene of meeting between my two principal characters, and gives occasion to other characters and relations in general, yet I no more describe the manners of village inhabitants. My people are of superior classes, though not the most elevated ; and, with a few exceptions, are of educated and cultivated minds and habits. I do not know, on a general view, whether my tragic or lighter Tales, etc., are most in number. Of those equally well executed, the tragic will, I suppose, make

INTRODUCTION TO

the greater impression ; but I know not that it requires more attention.'

'The plan of the work,' says Jeffrey, in a succinct, if not quite exact, epitome—'for it has more of plan and unity than any of Mr. Crabbe's former productions—is abundantly simple. Two brothers, both past middle age, meet together, for the first time since their infancy, in the Hall of their native Parish, which the elder and richer had purchased as a place of retirement for his declining age ; and there tell each other their own history, and then that of their guests, neighbours, and acquaintances. The senior is much the richer, and a bachelor—having been a little distasted with the sex by the unlucky result of a very extravagant passion. He is, moreover, rather too reserved, and somewhat Toryish, though with an excellent heart and a powerful understanding. The younger is very sensible also, but more open, social, and talkative ; a happy husband and father, with a tendency to Whiggism, and some notion of reform, and a disposition to think well both of men and women. The visit lasts two or three weeks in autumn ; and the Tales are told in the after-dinner *têtes-à-têtes* that take place in that time between the worthy brothers over their bottle.

'The married man, however, wearies at length for his wife and children ; and his brother lets him go with more coldness than he had expected. He goes with him a stage on the way ; and, inviting him to turn aside a little to look at a new purchase he had made of a sweet farm with a neat mansion, he finds his wife and children comfortably settled there ; and all ready to receive them ; and speedily discovers that he is, by his brother's bounty, the proprietor of a fair domain within a morning's ride of the Hall, where they may discuss politics, and tell tales any afternoon they may think proper.'—*Edinburgh Review*, 1819.

The Scene has also changed with Drama and Dramatis Personæ : no longer now the squalid purlieu of old, inhabited by paupers and ruffians, with the sea on one side, and as barren a heath on the other ; in place of that, a village with its tidy homesteads and well-to-do tenants, scattered

READINGS IN CRABBE

about an ancient Hall, in a well-wooded, well-watered, well-cultivated country, within easy reach of a thriving country town, and

‘West of the waves, and just beyond the sound’

of that old familiar sea, which (with all its sad associations) the Poet never liked to leave far behind him.¹

When he wrote the letter above quoted (two years before the publication of his book) he knew not whether his tragic exceeded the lighter stories in quantity, though he supposed they would leave the deeper impression on the reader. In the completed work I find the tragic stories fewer in number, and, to my thinking, assuredly not more impressive than such as are composed of that mingled yarn of grave and gay of which the kind of life he treats of is, I suppose, generally made up. ‘Nature’s sternest Painter’ may have mellowed with a prosperous old age, and from a comfortable grand-climacteric, liked to contemplate and represent a brighter aspect of humanity than his earlier life afforded him. Anyhow, he has here selected a subject whose character and circumstance require a

¹ ‘It was, I think, in the summer of 1787, that my father’ (then living in the Vale of Belvoir) ‘was seized, one fine summer’s day, with so intense a longing to see the sea, from which he had never before been so long absent, that he mounted his horse, rode alone to the coast of Lincolnshire, sixty miles from his house, dipped in the waves that washed the beach of Aldborough, and returned to Stathern.’—(From the Poet’s Biography, written by his son.)

INTRODUCTION TO

lighter touch and shadow less dark than such as he formerly delineated.

Those who now tell their own as well as their neighbours' stories are much of the Poet's own age as well as condition of life, and look back (as he may have looked) with what Sir Walter Scott calls a kind of humorous retrospect over their own lives, cheerfully extending to others the same kindly indulgence which they solicit for themselves. The book, if I mistake not, deals rather with the follies than with the vices of men, with the comedy rather than the tragedy of life. Assuredly there is scarce anything of that brutal or sordid villainy,¹ of which one has more than enough in the Poet's earlier work. And even the more sombre subjects of the book are relieved by the colloquial intercourse of the narrators, which twines about every story, and, letting in occasional glimpses of the country round, encircles them all with something of dramatic unity and interest, insomuch that of all the Poet's works this one alone does not leave a more or less melancholy impression upon me ; and, as I am myself more than old enough to love the sunny side of the wall, is on that account, I do not say the best, but certainly that which best I like, of all his numerous offspring.

Such, however, is not the case, I think, with

¹ I think, only one story of the baser sort—'Gretna Green'—a capital, if not agreeable, little drama in which all the characters defeat themselves by the very means they take to deceive others.

READINGS IN CRABBE

Crabbe's few readers, who, like Lord Byron, chiefly remember him by the sterner realities of his earlier work. Nay, quite recently Mr. Leslie Stephen in that one of his admirable essays which analyses the Poet's peculiar genius says :

‘The more humorous of these performances may be briefly dismissed. Crabbe possesses the faculty, but not in any eminent degree ; his hand is a little heavy, and one must remember that Mr. Tovell and his like were of the race who require to have a joke driven into their heads with a sledge-hammer. Once or twice we come upon a sketch which may help to explain Miss Austen's admiration. There is an old maid¹ devoted to china, and rejoicing in stuffed parrots and puppies, who might have been ridiculed by Emma Woodhouse ; and a Parson who would have suited the Eltons admirably.’

The spinster of the stuffed parrot indicates, I suppose, the heroine of ‘Procrastination’ in another series of tales. But Miss Austen, I think, might also have admired another, although more sensible, spinster in these, who tells of her girlish and only love while living with the grandmother who maintained her gentility in the little town she lived in at the cost of such little economies as ‘would scarce a parrot keep ;’ and the story of the romantic friend who, having proved the vanity of human bliss by the supposed death of a young lover, has devoted herself to his memory, insomuch that as she is one fine autumnal day protesting in her garden that, were he to be restored to her in all his youthful

¹ [Catherine Lloyd in the Parish Register, part III.]

INTRODUCTION TO

beauty, she would renounce the real rather than surrender the ideal Hero awaiting her elsewhere—behold him advancing toward her in the person of a prosperous, portly merchant, who reclaims, and, after some little hesitation on her part, retains her hand.

There is also an old Bachelor whom Miss Austen might have liked to hear recounting the matrimonial attempts which have resulted in the full enjoyment of single blessedness; his father's sarcastic indifference to the first, and the haughty defiance of the mother of the girl he first loved. And when the young lady's untimely death has settled that question, his own indifference to the bride his own mother has provided for him. And when that scheme has failed, and yet another after that, and the Bachelor feels himself secure in the consciousness of more than middle life having come upon him, his being captivated—and jilted—by a country Miss, toward whom he is so imperceptibly drawn at her father's house that

‘Time after time the maid went out and in,
Ere love was yet beginning to begin;
The first awakening proof, the early doubt,
Rose from observing she went in and out.’

Then there is a fair Widow, who, after wearing out one husband with her ruinous tantrums, finds herself all the happier for being denied them by a second. And when he too is

READINGS IN CRABBE

dead, and the probationary year of mourning scarce expired, her scarce ambiguous refusal (followed by acceptance) of a third suitor, for whom she is now so gracefully wearing her weeds as to invite a fourth.

If 'Love's Delay' be of a graver complexion, is there not some even graceful comedy in 'Love's Natural Death;' some broad comedy—too true to be farce—in 'William Bailey's' old housekeeper; and up and down the book surely many passages of gayer or graver humour; such as the Squire's satire on his own house and farm; his brother's account of the Vicar, whose daughter he married; the gallery of portraits in the 'Cathedral Walk,' besides many a shrewd remark so tersely put that I should call them epigram did not Mr. Stephen think the Poet incapable of such; others so covertly implied as to remind one of old John Murray's remark on Mr. Crabbe's conversation—that he said uncommon things in so common a way as to escape notice, though assuredly not the notice of so shrewd an observer as Mr. Stephen if he cared to listen, or to read?

Nevertheless, with all my own partiality for this book, I must acknowledge that, while it shares with the Poet's other works in his characteristic disregard of form and diction—of all indeed that is now called 'Art'—it is yet more chargeable with diffuseness, and even with some inconsistency of character and circumstance,

INTRODUCTION TO

for which the large canvas he had taken to work on, and perhaps some weariness in filling it up, may be in some measure accountable. So that, for one reason or another, but very few of Crabbe's few readers care to encounter the book. And hence this attempt of mine to entice them to it by an abstract, omitting some of the stories, retrenching others, either by excision of some parts, or the reduction of others into as concise prose as would comprehend the substance of much prosaic verse.

Not a very satisfactory sort of medley in any such case ; I know not if more or less so where verse and prose are often so near akin. I see, too, that in some cases they are too patchily intermingled. But I have tried, though not always successfully, to keep them distinct, and to let the Poet run on by himself whenever in his better vein ; in two cases—that of the 'Widow' and 'Love's Natural Death'—without any interruption of my own, though not without large deductions from the author in the former story.

On the other hand, more than as many other stories have shrunk under my hands into seeming disproportion with the Prologue by which the Poet introduces them, insomuch as they might almost as well have been cancelled were it not for carrying their introduction away with them.¹

¹ As 'Richard's Jealousy,' 'Sir Owen Dale's Revenge,' the 'Cathedral Walk,' in which the Poet's diffuse treatment seemed to me scarcely compensated by the interest of the story.

READINGS IN CRABBE

And such alterations have occasionally necessitated a change in some initial article or particle connecting two originally separated paragraphs ; of which I subjoin a list,¹ as also of a few that have inadvertently crept into the text from the margin of my copy ; all, I thought, crossed out before going to press. For any poetaster can amend many a careless expression which blemishes a passage that none but a poet could indite.

I have occasionally transposed the original text, especially when I thought to make the narrative run clearer by so doing. For in that respect, whether from lack or laxity of constructive skill, Crabbe is apt to wander and lose himself and his reader. This was shown especially in some prose novels, which at one time he tried his hand on, and (his son tells us), under good advice, committed to the fire.

I have replaced in the text some readings from the Poet's original MS. quoted in his son's standard edition, several of which appeared to me fresher, terser, and (as so often the case) more apt than the second thought afterward adopted.²

¹ [Omitted in this reprint.]

² A curious instance occurs in that fair Widow's story, when the original

‘Would you believe it, Richard, that fair she
Has had three husbands ? I repeat it, three !’

is supplanted by the very enigmatical couplet :

‘No need of pity, when the gentle dame
Has thrice resign'd and re-assumed her name.’

INTRODUCTION TO

Mr. Stephen has said—and surely said well—that, with all its short and long-comings, Crabbe's better work leaves its mark on the reader's mind and memory as only the work of genius can, while so many a more splendid vision of the fancy slips away, leaving scarce a wrack behind. If this abiding impression result (as perhaps in the case of Richardson or Wordsworth) from being, as it were, soaked in through the longer process by which the man's peculiar genius works, any abridgement, whether of omission or epitome, will diminish from the effect of the whole. But, on the other hand, it may serve, as I have said, to attract a reader to an original, which, as appears in this case, scarce anybody now cares to venture upon in its integrity.

I feel bound to make all apology for thus dealing with a Poet whose works are ignored, even if his name be known, by the readers and writers of the present generation. 'Pope in worsted stockings,' he has been called. But, in truth, the comparison, such as it is, scarcely reaches beyond Crabbe's earliest essays. For in 'The Village,' which first made him popular, he set out with Goldsmith rather than with Pope, though toward a very different object than 'Sweet Auburn.' And then, after nearly twenty years' silence (a rare interval for a successful author), appeared a volume of 'Tales'; and after them the 'Parish Register,' accompanied

READINGS IN CRABBE

with 'Sir Eustace Grey,' and by-and-by followed by 'The Borough': in all of which the style differed as much from that of Pope as the character and scene they treated of from the Wits and Courtiers of Twickenham and Hampton Court. But all so sharply delineated as to make Lord Byron, according to the comprehensive and comfortable form of decision that is never out of date, pronounce him to be Nature's best, if sternest, painter.

In the present 'Tales of the Hall,' the poet, as I have said, has in some measure shifted his ground, and Comedy, whose shrewder—not to say more sardonic—element ran through his earlier work, here discovers something of her lighter humour. Not that the Poet's old Tragic power, whether of Terror or Pity, is either absent or abated; as witness the story of 'Ruth'; and that of 'The Sisters,' of whom one, with the simple piety that has held her up against the storm which has overtaken them both, devotes herself to the care of her whom it has bewildered, as she wanders alone in the deepening gloom of evening,

'Or cries at mid-day, "Then Good-night to all!"'

And to prove how the Poet's landscape hand has not slackened in its cunning, we may accompany the Brothers in their morning ramble to the farm; or Richard on his horse to the

INTRODUCTION TO

neighbouring town ; or at a respectful distance observe those two spinsters conversing in their garden on that so still autumnal day,

‘When the wing’d insect settled in our sight,
And waited wind to recommence her flight,’

till interrupted by the very substantial apparition of him who ought long ago to have been a Spirit in heaven.

But ‘Tragedy, Comedy, Pastoral,’ all that, applauded as it was by contemporary critics and representatives of literature, contributed to make this writer generally read in the first quarter of this century, has left of him to the present generation but the empty echo of a name, unless such as may recall the

‘John Richard William Alexander Dwyer’

of the ‘Rejected Addresses.’ Miss Austen, indeed, who is still so much renowned for her representation of genteel humanity, was so unaccountably smitten with Crabbe in his worsted hose, that she playfully declared she would not refuse him for her husband. That Sir Walter Scott, with his wider experience of mankind, could listen to the reading of him when no longer able to hold the book for himself, may pass for little in these days when the Lammermoors and Midlothians are almost as much eclipsed by modern fiction as ‘The Lady of the Lake’ and ‘Marmion’ by the poetic revelations

READINGS IN CRABBE

which have extinguished Crabbe. Nevertheless, among the many obsolete authorities of yesterday, there is yet one—William Wordsworth—who now rules, where once he was least, among the sacred Brotherhood to which he was exclusive enough in admitting others, and far too honest to make any exception out of compliment to anyone on any occasion; he did, nevertheless, thus write to the Poet's son and biographer in 1834: 'Any testimony from me to the merit of your revered father's works would, I feel, be superfluous, if not impertinent. They will last, from their combined merits as poetry and truth, full as long as anything that has been expressed in verse since they first made their appearance'—a period which, be it noted, includes all Wordsworth's own volumes except 'Yarrow Revisited,' 'The Prelude,' and 'The Borderers.' And Wordsworth's living successor to the laurel no less participates with him in his appreciation of their forgotten brother. Almost the last time I met him he was quoting from memory that fine passage in 'Delay has Danger,' where the late autumn landscape seems to borrow from the conscience-stricken lover who gazes on it the gloom which it reflects upon him; and in the course of further conversation on the subject, Mr. Tennyson added, 'Crabbe has a world of his own'; by virtue of that original genius, I suppose, which is said to entitle, and carry, the possessor to what we call Immortality.

WRITTEN BY PETRARCH IN HIS VIRGIL

LAURA, illustrious in herself, and long celebrated in my verse, first dawned upon my eyes, while I was yet a youth, at the Church of St. Clara in Avignon, in the year of our Lord 1327, on the 6th of April, at daybreak. And in that same City, in that same month of April, and that same morning hour, of the year 1348, was that fairer light from the light of day withdrawn, I being then at Verona, alas ! unconscious of my loss.

Her most fair and chaste body was deposited on the evening of the day of her death in the cemetery of the Minor Brothers. For her soul, I am persuaded (as Seneca was of Africanus) that it is returned to the Heaven whence it came.

I have been constrained by a kind of sad satisfaction to inscribe this memorial in a book which the most frequently comes under my eyes ; to warn me there is nothing more to engross me in this world, and that, the one great

READINGS IN CRABBE

and age seems to fulfil (in logical language) the *accidental* definition of a classic.'

For a notice of this passage (which may be read at large in Cardinal Newman's sixth Discourse delivered to the Catholics of Dublin, p. 150, Edit. 1873) I am indebted to Mr. Leslie Stephen, against whom I ventured to break a lance, and who has thus supplied me with one that recoils upon myself for having mutilated a poem which so great an authority looks on as so perfect.

[*June*, 1883.]

WRITTEN BY PETRARCH IN HIS VIRGIL

LAURA, illustrious in herself, and long celebrated in my verse, first dawned upon my eyes, while I was yet a youth, at the Church of St. Clara in Avignon, in the year of our Lord 1327, on the 6th of April, at daybreak. And in that same City, in that same month of April, and that same morning hour, of the year 1348, was that fairer light from the light of day withdrawn, I being then at Verona, alas ! unconscious of my loss.

Her most fair and chaste body was deposited on the evening of the day of her death in the cemetery of the Minor Brothers. For her soul, I am persuaded (as Seneca was of Africanus) that it is returned to the Heaven whence it came.

I have been constrained by a kind of sad satisfaction to inscribe this memorial in a book which the most frequently comes under my eyes ; to warn me there is nothing more to engross me in this world, and that, the one great

PETRARCH

tie being broken, it is time to think of quitting Babylon for ever. And this, I trust, with the Grace of God, will not be difficult to one who constantly and manfully contemplates the vain anxieties, empty hopes, and unexpected issues of his foregone life.

MEMOIR
OF
BERNARD BARTON

(From a letter of Bernard Barton's.)

‘2 mo, 11, 1839.

‘THY cordial approval of my brother John’s hearty wish to bring us back to the simple habits of the olden time, induces me to ask thee if I mentioned in either of my late letters the curious old papers he stumbled on in hunting through the repositories of our late excellent spinster sister? I quite forget whether I did or not; so I will not at a venture repeat all the items. But he found an inventory of the goods and chattels of our great-grandfather, John Barton of Ive-Gill, a little hamlet about five or seven miles from Carlisle; by which it seems our progenitor was one of those truly patriarchal personages, a Cumbrian statesman—living on his own little estate, and drawing from it all

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

things needful for himself and his family. I will be bound for it my good brother was more gratified at finding his earliest traceable ancestor such an one than if he had found him in the college of heralds with *gules purple* and argent emblazoned as his bearings. The total amount of his stock, independent of house, land, and any money he might have, seems by the valuation to have been £61 6s., and the copy of his admission to his little estate gives the fine as £5, so that I suppose its annual value was then estimated at £2 15s. This was about a century back. Yet this man was the chief means of building the little chapel in the dale, still standing. (He was a churchman.) I doubt not he was a fine simple-hearted noble-minded yeoman, in his day, and I am very proud of him. Why did his son, my grandfather, after whom I was named, ever leave that pleasant dale, and go and set up a manufactory in Carlisle; inventing a piece of machinery¹ for which he had a medal from the Royal Society?—so says Pennant. Methinks he had better have abode in the old grey stone, slate-covered homestead on the banks of that pretty brooklet the Ive! But I bear his name, so I will not quarrel with his memory.'

¹ The manufactory was one of calico-printing. The 'piece of machinery' is thus described by Pennant:—'Saw at Mr. Bernard Barton's a pleasing sight of twelve little girls spinning at once at a horizontal wheel, which set twelve bobbins in motion; yet so contrived, that should any accident happen to one, the motion of that might be stopped without any impediment to the others.'

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

Thus far Bernard Barton traces the history of his family. And it appears that, as his grandfather's mechanical genius drew him away from the pastoral life at Ive-Gill, so his father, who was of a literary turn, reconciled himself with difficulty to the manufactory he inherited at Carlisle. 'I always,' he wrote, 'perused a Locke, an Addison, or a Pope, with delight,¹ and ever sat down to my ledger with a sort of disgust'; and he at one time determined to quit a business in which he had been 'neither successfully nor agreeably engaged,' and become 'a minister of some sect of religion—it will *then* be time,' he says, 'to determine of what sect, when I am enabled to judge of their respective merits. But this I will freely confess to you, that if there be any one of them, the tenets of which are more favourable to rational religion than the one in which I have been brought up, I shall be so far from thinking it a crime, that I cannot but consider it my duty to embrace it.' This, however, was written when he was very young. He never gave up business, but changed one business for another, and shifted the scene of its transaction. His religious inquiries led to a more decided result. He very soon left the Church of England, and became a member of the Society of Friends.

About the same time he married a Quaker

¹ See an amusing account of his portrait, with his favourite books about him, painted about this time, Letter I. of this Collection.

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

lady, Mary Done, of a Cheshire family. She bore him several children : but only three lived to maturity ; two daughters, of whom the elder, Maria, distinguished herself, afterward, as the author of many useful children's books under her married name, Hack ; and one son, Bernard, the poet, who was born on January 31, 1784.

Shortly before Bernard's birth, however, John Barton had removed to London, where he engaged in something of the same business he had quitted at Carlisle, but where he probably found society and interests more suited to his taste. I do not know whether he ever acted as minister in his Society ; but his name appears on one record of their most valuable endeavours. The Quakers had from the very time of George Fox distinguished themselves by their opposition to slavery : a like feeling had gradually been growing up in other quarters of England ; and in 1787 a mixed committee of twelve persons was appointed to promote the Abolition of the Slave-trade ; Wilberforce engaging to second them with all his influence in parliament. Among these twelve stands the name of John Barton, in honourable companionship with that of Thomas Clarkson.

‘ I lost my mother,’ again writes B. B., ‘ when I was only a few days old ; and my father married again in my infancy so wisely and so happily, that I knew not but his second wife was my own mother, till I learned it years after

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

at a boarding school.' The name of this amiable step-mother was Elizabeth Horne ; a Quaker also ; daughter of a merchant, who, with his house in London and villa at Tottenham, was an object of B. B.'s earliest regard and latest recollection. 'Some of my first recollections,' he wrote fifty years after, 'are, looking out of his parlour windows at Bankside on the busy Thames, with its ever-changing scene, and the dome of St. Paul's rising out of the smoke on the other side of the river. But my most delightful recollections of boyhood are connected with the fine old country-house in a green lane diverging from the high road which runs through Tottenham. I would give seven years of life as it now is, for a week of that which I then led. It was a large old house, with an iron palisade and a pair of iron gates in front, and a huge stone eagle on each pier. Leading up to the steps by which you went up to the hall door, was a wide gravel walk, bordered in summer time by huge tubs, in which were orange and lemon trees, and in the centre of the grass-plot stood a tub yet huger, holding an enormous aloe. The hall itself, to my fancy then lofty and wide as a cathedral would seem now, was a famous place for battledore and shuttlecock ; and behind was a garden, equal to that of old Alcinous himself. My favourite walk was one of turf by a long strait pond, bordered with lime-trees. But the whole demesne was the fairy ground of

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

my childhood; and its presiding genius was grandpapa. He must have been a handsome man in his youth, for I remember him at nearly eighty, a very fine looking one, even in the decay of mind and body. In the morning a velvet cap; by dinner, a flaxen wig; and features always expressive of benignity and placid cheerfulness. When he walked out into the garden, his cocked hat and amber-headed cane completed his costume. To the recollection of this delightful personage, I am, I think, indebted for many soothing and pleasing associations with old age.'

John Barton did not live to see the only child—a son—that was born to him by this second marriage. He had some time before quitted London, and taken partnership in a malting business at Hertford, where he died, in the prime of life. After his death his widow returned to Tottenham, and there with her son and step-children continued for some time to reside.

In due time, Bernard was sent to a much-esteemed Quaker school at Ipswich: returning always to spend his holidays at Tottenham. When fourteen years old, he was apprenticed to Mr. Samuel Jesup, a shopkeeper at Halstead in Essex. 'There I stood,' he writes, 'for eight years behind the counter of the corner shop at the top of Halstead Hill, kept to this day' (Nov. 9, 1828) 'by my old master, and still worthy uncle S. Jesup.'

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

In 1806 he went to Woodbridge ; and a year after married Lucy Jesup, the niece of his former master, and entered into partnership with her brother as coal and corn merchant. But she died a year after marriage, in giving birth to the only child, who now survives them both ; and he, perhaps sickened with the scene of his blighted love,¹ and finding, like his father, that

¹ The following verses were published in his first volume :—

O thou from earth for ever fled !
Whose reliques lie among the dead,
With daisied verdure overspread,
My Lucy !

For many a weary day gone by,
How many a solitary sigh
I've heaved for thee, no longer nigh,
My Lucy !

And if to grieve I cease awhile,
I look for that enchanting smile
Which all my cares could once beguile
My Lucy !

But ah ! in vain—the blameless art
Which used to soothe my troubled heart
Is lost with thee, my better part,
My Lucy !

Thy converse, innocently free,
That made the fiends of fancy flee,
Ah then I feel the want of thee,
My Lucy !

Nor is it for myself alone
That I thy early death bemoan ;
Our infant now is *all my own*,
My Lucy !

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

he had less taste for the ledger than for literature, almost directly quitted Woodbridge, and engaged himself as private tutor in the family of Mr. Waterhouse, a merchant in Liverpool. There Bernard Barton had some family connexions ; and there also he was kindly received and entertained by the Roscoe family, who were old acquaintances of his father and mother.

After a year's residence in Liverpool, he returned to Woodbridge, and there became clerk in Messrs. Alexander's bank—a kind of office which secures certain, if small, remuneration, without any of the anxiety of business ; and

Couldst thou a guardian angel prove
To the dear offspring of our love,
Until it reach the realms above,
My Lucy !

Could thy angelic spirit stray,
Unseen companion of my way,
As onward drags the weary day,
My Lucy !

And when the midnight hour shall close
Mine eyes in short unsound repose,
Couldst thou but whisper off my woes,
My Lucy !

Then, though thy loss I must deplore,
Till next we meet to part no more
I'd wait the grasp that from me tore
My Lucy !

For, be my life but spent like thine,
With joy shall I that life resign,
And fly to thee, for ever mine,
My Lucy !

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

there he continued for forty years, working till within two days of his death.

He had always been fond of books ; was one of the most active members of a Woodbridge Book Club, which he only quitted a month or two before he died ; and had written and sent to his friends occasional copies of verse. In 1812 he published his first volume of Poems, called ‘Metrical Effusions,’ and began a correspondence with Southey, who continued to give him most kind and wise advice for many years. A complimentary copy of verses which he had addressed to the author of the ‘Queen’s Wake,’ (just then come into notice,) brought him long and vehement letters from the Ettrick Shepherd, full of thanks to Barton and praises of himself ; and along with all this, a tragedy ‘that will astonish the world ten times more than the “Queen’s Wake” has done,’ a tragedy with so many characters in it of equal importance ‘that justice cannot be done it in Edinburgh,’ and therefore the author confidentially intrusts it to Bernard Barton to get it represented in London. Theatres, and managers of theatres, being rather out of the Quaker poet’s way, he called into council Capel Lofft, with whom he also corresponded, and from whom he received flying visits in the course of Lofft’s attendance at the county sessions. Lofft took the matter into consideration, and promised all assistance, but on the whole dissuaded Hogg from trying London managers ; he himself having

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

sent them three tragedies of his own ; and others by friends of 'transcendent merit, equal to Miss Baillie's,' all of which had fallen on barren ground.¹

In 1818 Bernard Barton published by subscription a thin 4to volume—'Poems by an Amateur,'—and shortly afterward appeared under the auspices of a London publisher in a volume of 'Poems,' which, being favourably reviewed in the Edinburgh, reached a fourth edition by 1825. In 1822 came out his 'Napoleon,' which he managed to get dedicated and presented to George the Fourth. And now being launched upon the public with a favouring gale, he pushed forward with an eagerness that was little to his ultimate advantage. Between 1822 and 1828 he published five volumes of verse. Each of these contained many pretty poems ; but many that were very hasty, and written more as task-work, when the mind was already wearied with the desk-labours of the day ;² not waiting for the occasion to suggest, nor the impulse to improve. Of this he was

¹ This was not B. B.'s nearest approach to theatrical honours. In 1822, (just after the Review on him in the Edinburgh,) his niece Elizabeth Hack writes to him, 'Aunt Lizzy tells us, that when one of the Sharps was at Paris some little time ago, there was a party of English actors performing plays. One night he was in the theatre, and an actor of the name of Barton was announced, when the audience called out to inquire if it was the Quaker poet.'

² The 'Poetic Vigils,' published in 1824, have (he says in the Preface) 'at least this claim to the title given them, that they are the production of hours snatched from recreation or repose.'

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

warned by his friends, and of the danger of making himself too cheap with publishers and the public. But the advice of others had little weight in the hour of success with one so inexperienced and so hopeful as himself. And there was in Bernard Barton a certain boyish impetuosity in pursuit of anything he had at heart, that age itself scarcely could subdue. Thus it was with his correspondence ; and thus it was with his poetry. He wrote always with great facility, almost unretarded by that worst labour of correction ; for he was not fastidious himself about exactness of thought or of harmony of numbers, and he could scarce comprehend why the public should be less easily satisfied. Or if he did labour—and labour he did at that time—still it was at task-work of a kind he liked. He loved poetry for its own sake, whether to read or to compose, and felt assured that he was employing his own talent in the cause of virtue and religion,¹ and the blameless affections of men. No doubt he also liked praise ; though not in any degree proportional to his eagerness in publishing ; but inversely, rather. Very vain men are seldom so careless in the production of that from which they expect their reward. And Barton soon seemed to forget one book in the preparation of another ; and in time to forget the

¹ The 'Devotional Verses' (1827) were begun with a very serious intention, and seem written carefully throughout, as became the subject.

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

contents of all, except a few pieces that arose more directly from his heart, and so naturally attached themselves to his memory. And there was in him one great sign of the absence of any inordinate vanity—the total want of envy. He was quite as anxious others should publish as himself; would never believe there could be too much poetry abroad; would scarce admit a fault in the verses of others, whether private friends or public authors, though after a while (as in his own case) his mind silently and unconsciously adopted only what was good in them. A much more likely motive for this mistaken activity of publication is, the desire to add to the slender income of his clerkship. For Bernard Barton was a generous, and not a provident man; and, few and modest as were his wants, he did not usually manage to square them to the still narrower limit of his means.

But apart from all these motives, the preparation of a book was amusement and excitement to one who had little enough of it in the ordinary routine of daily life: treaties with publishers—arrangements of printing—correspondence with friends on the subject—and, when the little volume was at last afloat, watching it for a while somewhat as a boy watches a paper boat committed to the sea.

His health appears to have suffered from his exertions. He writes to friends complaining of low spirits, head-ache, etc., the usual effect of

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

sedentary habits, late hours, and overtasked brain. Charles Lamb advises after his usual fashion : some grains of sterling available truth amid a heap of jests.¹ Southey replies more gravely, in a letter that should be read and marked by every student.

‘ Keswick, 27 Jan., 1822.

‘ I am much pleased with the ‘ Poet’s Lot ’—no, not with his lot, but with the verses in which he describes it. But let me ask you—are you not pursuing your studies intemperately, and to the danger of your health? To be “ writing long after midnight ” and “ with a

¹ You are too much apprehensive about your complaint. I know many that are always ailing of it, and live on to a good old age. I know a merry fellow (you partly know him) who, when his medical adviser told him he had drunk away all *that part*, congratulated himself (now his liver was gone) that he should be the longest liver of the two. The best way in these cases is to keep yourself as ignorant as you can—as ignorant as the world was before Galen—of the entire inner constructions of the animal man ; not to be conscious of a midriff ; to hold kidneys (save of sheep and swine) to be an agreeable fiction ; not to know whereabouts the gall grows ; to account the circulation of the blood a mere idle whim of Harvey’s ; to acknowledge no mechanism not visible. For, once fix the seat of your disorder, and your fancies flux into it like so many bad humours. Those medical gentry choose each his favourite part, one takes the lungs—another the aforesaid liver, and refers to that whatever in the animal economy is amiss. Above all, use exercise, take a little more spirituous liquors, learn to smoke, continue to keep a good conscience, and avoid tamperings with hard terms of art—viscosity, schirrosity, and those bugbears by which simple patients are scared into their graves. Believe the general sense of the mercantile world, which holds that desks are not deadly. It is the mind, good B. B., and not the limbs, that taints by long sitting. Think of the patience of tailors—think how long the Lord Chancellor sits—think of the brooding hen.’

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

miserable head-ache" is what no man can do with impunity ; and what no pressure of business, no ardour of composition, has ever made me do. I beseech you, remember the fate of Kirke White ;—and remember that if you sacrifice your health (not to say your life) in the same manner, you will be held up to your own community as a warning—not as an example for imitation. The spirit which disturbed poor Scott of Amwell in his last illness will fasten upon your name ; and your fate will be instanced to prove the inconsistency of your pursuits with that sobriety and evenness of mind which Quakerism requires, and is intended to produce.—

‘ You will take this as it is meant, I am sure.

‘ My friend, go early to bed ;—and if you eat suppers, read afterwards, but never compose, that you may lie down with a quiet intellect. There is an intellectual as well as a religious peace of mind ;—and without the former, be assured there can be no health for a poet. God bless you.

Yours very truly,
R. SOUTHEY.’

Mr. Barton had even entertained an idea of quitting the bank altogether, and trusting to his pen for subsistence.—An unwise scheme in all men : most unwise in one who had so little tact with the public as himself. From this,

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

however, he was fortunately diverted by all the friends to whom he communicated his design.¹ Charles Lamb thus wrote to him :—

‘9th January, 1823.

‘Throw yourself on the world without any rational plan of support beyond what the chance employ of booksellers would afford you !!!

‘Throw yourself rather, my dear Sir, from

¹ So long ago as the date of his first volume he had written to Lord Byron on the subject ; who thus answered him :—

‘SIR,

‘St. James’s Street, June 1, 1812.

The most satisfactory answer to the concluding part of your letter is, that Mr. Murray will re-publish your volume if you still retain your inclination for the experiment, which I trust will be successful. Some weeks ago my friend Mr. Rogers showed me some of the Stanzas in MS., and I then expressed my opinion of their merit, which a further perusal of the printed volume has given me no reason to revoke. I mention this as it may not be disagreeable to you to learn that I entertained a very favourable opinion of your power before I was aware that such sentiments were reciprocal.—Waving your obliging expressions as to my own productions, for which I thank you very sincerely, and assure you that I think not lightly of the praise of one whose approbation is valuable ; will you allow me to talk to you candidly, not critically, on the subject of yours ?—You will not suspect me of a wish to discourage, since I pointed out to the publisher the propriety of complying with your wishes. I think more highly of your poetical talents than it would perhaps gratify you to hear expressed, for I believe, from what I observe of your mind, that you are above flattery.—To come to the point, you deserve success ; but we knew before Addison wrote his Cato, that desert does not always command it. But suppose it attained—

“You know what ills the author’s life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the *patron*, and the jail.”—

Do not renounce writing, but never trust entirely to authorship. If you have a profession, retain it, it will be like Prior’s fellowship,

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

the steep Tarpeian rock, slap-dash headlong upon iron spikes. If you have but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live a century in them, rather than turn slave to the booksellers. They are Turks and Tartars when they have poor authors at their beck. Hitherto you have been at arm's length from them. Come not within their grasp. I have known many authors want for bread—some repining—others enjoying the blessed security of a counting-house—all agreeing they had rather have been tailors, weavers,—what not?—rather than the things they were. I have known some starved, some to go mad, one dear friend literally dying in a workhouse. You know not what a rapacious, dishonest set these booksellers are. Ask even Southey, who (a single case almost) has made a fortune by book-drudgery, what he has found them. O you know not, may

a last and sure resource.—Compare Mr. Rogers with other authors of the day; assuredly he is among the first of living poets, but is it to that he owes his station in society and his intimacy in the best circles? no, it is to his prudence and respectability. The world (a bad one I own) courts him because he has no occasion to court it.—He is a poet, nor is he less so because he was something more.—I am not sorry to hear that you are not tempted by the vicinity of Capel Loft, Esq., though if he had done for you what he has for the Bloomfields I should never have laughed at his rage for patronizing.—But a truly well constituted mind will ever be independent.—That you may be so is my sincere wish; and if others think as well of your poetry as I do, you will have no cause to complain of your readers.—Believe me,

Your obliged and obedient Servant,

BYRON.'

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

you never know ! the miseries of subsisting by authorship. 'Tis a pretty appendage to a situation like yours or mine ; but a slavery worse than all slavery, to be a bookseller's dependant, to drudge your brains for pots of ale and breasts of mutton, to change your free thoughts and voluntary numbers for ungracious task-work. The booksellers hate *us*. The reason I take to be, that, contrary to other trades, in which the master gets all the credit, (a jeweller or silversmith for instance,) and the journeyman, who really does the fine work, is in the background : in *our* work the world gives all the credit to *us*, whom *they* consider as *their* journeymen, and therefore do they hate us, and cheat us, and oppress us, and would wring the blood of us out, to put another sixpence in their mechanic pouches.

.

‘ Keep to your bank, and the bank will keep you. Trust not to the public : you may hang, starve, drown yourself for anything that worthy personage cares. I bless every star that Providence, not seeing good to make me independent, has seen it next good to settle me upon the stable foundation of Leadenhall. Sit down, good B. B., in the banking office : what ! is there not from six to eleven, P.M., six days in the week, and is there not all Sunday ? Fie, what a superfluity of man's time, if you could think so ! Enough for relaxation, mirth, converse, poetry,

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

good thoughts, quiet thoughts. O the corroding, torturing, tormenting thoughts that disturb the brain of the unlucky wight, who must draw upon it for daily sustenance ! Henceforth I retract all my fond complaints of mercantile employment—look upon them as lovers' quarrels. I was but half in earnest. Welcome dead timber of a desk that gives me life. A little grumbling is a wholesome medicine for the spleen, but in my inner heart do I approve and embrace this our close but unharassing way of life. I am quite serious.

Yours truly,
C. LAMB.'

In 1824, however, his income received a handsome addition from another quarter. A few members of his Society, including some of the wealthier of his own family, raised £1200 among them for his benefit. Mr. Shewell of Ipswich, who was one of the main contributors to this fund, writes to me that the scheme originated with Joseph John Gurney :—‘ one of those innumerable acts of kindness and beneficence which marked his character, and the *measure* of which will never be known upon the earth.’ Nor was the measure of it known in this instance ; for of the large sum that he handed in as the subscription of several, Mr. Shewell thinks he was ‘ a larger donor than he chose to acknowledge.’ The money thus raised was vested in

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

the name of Mr. Shewell, and its yearly interest paid to Bernard Barton ; till, in 1839, the greater part of it was laid out in buying that old house and the land round it, which Mr. Barton so much loved as the habitation of his wife's mother, Martha Jesup. It seems that he felt some delicacy at first in accepting this munificent testimony which his own people offered to his talents. But here again Lamb assisted him with plain, sincere, and wise advice.

‘ *March 24th, 1824.*

‘ DEAR B. B.,

I hasten to say that if my opinion can strengthen you in your choice it is decisive for your acceptance of what has been so handsomely offered. I can see nothing injurious to your most honourable sense. Think that you are called to a poetical ministry—nothing worse—the minister is worthy of his hire.

‘ The only objection I feel is founded on a fear that the acceptance may be a temptation to you to let fall the bone (hard as it is) which is in your mouth, and must afford tolerable pickings, for the shadow of independence. You cannot propose to become independent on what the low state of interest could afford you from such a principal as you mention ; and the most graceful excuse for the acceptance would be, that it left you free to your voluntary functions : that is the less *light* part of the scruple. It has

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

no darker shade. I put in *darker*, because of the ambiguity of the word *light*, which Donne, in his admirable poem on the Metempsychosis, has so ingeniously illustrated in his invocation—

“Make my *dark heavy* poem *light and light*—”

where the two senses of *light* are opposed to different opposites. A trifling criticism.—I can see no reason for any scruple then but what arises from your own interest; which is in your own power, of course, to solve. If you still have doubts, read over Sanderson’s *Cases of Conscience*, and Jeremy Taylor’s *Ductor Dubitantium*; the first a moderate octavo, the latter a folio of nine hundred close pages: and when you have thoroughly digested the admirable reasons *pro* and *con* which they give for every possible case, you will be—just as wise as when you began. Every man is his own best casuist; and, after all, as Ephraim Smooth, in the pleasant comedy of *Wild Oats*, has it, “There is no harm in a guinea.” *A fortiori*, there is less in two thousand.

‘I therefore most sincerely congratulate with you, excepting so far as excepted above. If you have fair prospects of adding to the principal, cut the bank; but in either case, do not refuse an honest service. Your heart tells you it is not offered to bribe you *from* any duty, but *to* a duty which you feel to be your vocation.

Farewell heartily,

C. L.’

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

While Mr. Barton had been busy publishing, his correspondence with literary people had greatly increased. The drawers and boxes which at last received the overflowings of his capacious Quaker pockets, (and he scarcely ever destroyed a letter,) contain a multitude of letters from literary people, dead or living. Beside those from Southey and Lamb, there are many from Charles Lloyd—simple, noble, and kind, telling of his many Poems—of a Romance in six volumes he was then copying out with his own hand for the seventh time;—from old Lloyd, the father, into whose hands Barton's letters occasionally fell by mistake, telling of his son's many books, but 'that it is easier to write them than to gain numerous readers';—from old Mr. Plumptre, who mourns the insensibility of publishers to his castigated editions of Gay and Dibdin—leaving one letter midway, to go to his 'spring task of pruning the gooseberries and currants.' There are also girlish letters from L. E. L.; and feminine ones from Mrs. Hemans. Of living authors there are many letters from Mitford, Bowring, Conder, Mrs. Opie, C. B. Tayler, the Howitts, etc.

Owing to Mr. Barton's circumstances, his connexion with most of these persons was solely by letter. He went indeed occasionally to Hadleigh, where Dr. Drake then flourished, and Mr. Tayler was curate—to Mr. Mitford's

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

at Benhall¹—and he visited Charles Lamb once or twice in London and at Islington. He once also met Southey at Thomas Clarkson's at Playford, in the spring of 1824. But the rest of the persons whose letters I have just mentioned, I believe he never saw. And thus perhaps he acquired a habit of writing that supplied the place of personal intercourse. Confined to a town where there was but little stirring in the literary way, he naturally travelled out of it by letter, for communication on those matters ; and this habit gradually extended itself to acquaintances not literary, whom he seemed as happy to converse with by letter as face to face. His correspondence with Mr. Clemesha arose out of their meeting once, and once only, by chance in

¹ Here is one of the notes that used to call B.B. to Benhall in those days.

' Benhall, 1820.

‘MY DEAR POET,

We got your note to-day. We are at home and shall be glad to see you, but hope you will not swim here ; in other words, we think it better that you should wait, till we can seat you under a chestnut and listen to your oracular sayings. We hope that, like your sister of the woods, you are in full song ; she does not print, I think ; we hope you do ; seeing that you beat her in sense, though she has a little the advantage in melody. Together you will make a pretty duet in our groves. You have both your defects ; she devours glow-worms, you take snuff ; she is in a great hurry to go away, and you are prodigious slow in arriving ; she sings at night, when nobody can hear her, and you write for Ackermann, which nobody thinks of reading. In spite of all this, you will get a hundred a year from the king, and settle at Woodbridge ; in another month, she will find no more flies, and set off for Egypt.

Truly yours,

J. M.’

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

the commercial room of an inn. And with Mrs. Sutton, who, beside other matters of interest, could tell him about the 'North Countrie,' from which his ancestors came, and which he always loved in fancy, (for he never saw it,)—he kept up a correspondence of nearly thirty years, though he and she never met to give form and substance to their visionary conceptions of one another.

From the year 1828, his books, as well as his correspondence with those 'whose talk was of' books, declined; and soon after this he seemed to settle down contentedly into that quiet course of life in which he continued to the end. His literary talents, social amiability, and blameless character made him respected, liked, and courted among his neighbours. Few, high or low, but were glad to see him at his customary place in the bank, from which he smiled a kindly greeting, or came down with friendly open hand, and some frank words of family inquiry—perhaps with the offer of a pinch from his never-failing snuff box—or the withdrawal of the visitor, if more intimate, to see some letter or copy of verses, just received or just composed, or some picture just purchased. Few, high or low, but were glad to have him at their tables; where he was equally pleasant and equally pleased, whether with the fine folks at the Hall, or with the homely company at the Farm; carrying everywhere indifferently the same good feeling, good spirits, and good manners; and by a happy

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

frankness of nature, that did not too precisely measure its utterance on such occasions, checker-ing the conventional gentility of the drawing-room with some humours of humbler life, which in turn he refined with a little sprinkling of literature.—Now too, after having long lived in a house that was just big enough to sit and sleep in, while he was obliged to board with the ladies of a Quaker school over the way,¹ he obtained a convenient house of his own, where he got his books and pictures about him. But, more than all this, his daughter was now grown up to be his housekeeper and companion. And amiable as Bernard Barton was in social life, his amiability in this little *tête-à-tête* household of his was yet a fairer thing to behold ; so completely was all authority absorbed into confidence, and into love—

‘A constant flow of love, that knew no fall,
Ne’er roughen’d by those cataracts and breaks
That humour interposed too often makes,’

but gliding on uninterruptedly for twenty years, until death concealed its current from all human witness.

In earlier life Bernard Barton had been a fair pedestrian ; and was fond of walking over to the

¹ Where he writes a letter one day, but he knows not if intelligibly ; ‘for all hands are busy round me to clap, to starch, to iron, to plait—in plain English, ’tis washing-day ; and I am now writing close to a table on which is a basin of starch, caps, kerchiefs, etc., and busy hands and tongues round it.’

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

house of his friend Arthur Biddell at Playford. There, beside the instructive and agreeable society of his host and hostess, he used to meet George Airy, now Astronomer Royal, then a lad of wonderful promise ; with whom he had many a discussion about poetry, and Sir Walter's last new novel, a volume of which perhaps the poet had brought in his pocket. Mr. Biddell, at one time, lent him a horse to expedite his journeys to and fro, and to refresh him with some wholesome change of exercise. But of that Barton soon tired. He gradually got to dislike exercise very much ; and no doubt greatly injured his health by its disuse. But it was not to be wondered at, that having spent the day in the uncongenial task of 'figure-work,' as he called it, he should covet his evenings for books, or verses, or social intercourse. It was very difficult to get him out even for a stroll in the garden after dinner, or along the banks of his favourite Deben on a summer evening. He would, after going a little way, with much humorous grumbling at the useless fatigue he was put to endure, stop short of a sudden, and, sitting down in the long grass by the river-side, watch the tide run past, and the well-known vessels gliding into harbour, or dropping down to pursue their voyage under the stars at sea, until his companions, returning from their prolonged walk, drew him to his feet again, to saunter homeward far more willingly than he set forth, with the prospect of the easy

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

chair, the book, and the cheerful supper before him.

His excursions rarely extended beyond a few miles round Woodbridge—to the vale of Dedham, Constable's birth-place and painting-room ; or to the neighbouring sea-coast, loved for its own sake—and few could love the sea and the heaths beside it better than he did—but doubly dear to him from its association with the memory and poetry of Crabbe. Once or twice he went as far as Hampshire on a visit to his brother ; and once he visited Mr. W. B. Donne, at Mattishall, in Norfolk, where he saw many portraits and mementoes of his favourite poet Cowper, Mr. Donne's kinsman. That which most interested him there was Mrs. Bodham, ninety years old, and almost blind, but with all the courtesy of the old school about her—once the 'Rose' whom Cowper had played with at Catfield parsonage when both were children together, and whom until 1790, when she revived their acquaintance by sending him his mother's picture, he had thought 'withered and fallen from the stalk.' Such little excursions it might be absurd to record of other men ; but they were some of the few that Bernard Barton could take, and from their rare occurrence, and the simplicity of his nature, they made a strong impression upon him.

He still continued to write verses, as well on private occasions as for annuals ; and in 1836

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

published another volume, chiefly composed of such fragments. In 1845 came out his last volume ; which he got permission to dedicate to the Queen. He sent also a copy of it to Sir Robert Peel, then prime minister, with whom he had already corresponded slightly on the subject of the income tax, which Mr. Barton thought pressed rather unduly on clerks, and others, whose narrow income was only for life. Sir Robert asked him to dinner at Whitehall.—‘Twenty years ago,’ writes Barton, ‘such a summons had elated and exhilarated me—now I feel humbled and depressed at it. Why?—but that I verge on the period when the lighting down of the grasshopper is a burden, and desire itself begins to fail.’—He went, however, and was sincerely pleased with the courtesy, and astonished at the social ease, of a man who had so many and so heavy cares on his shoulders. When the Quaker poet was first ushered into the room, there were but three guests assembled, of whom he little expected to know one. But the mutual exclamations of ‘George Airy!’ and ‘Bernard Barton!’ soon satisfied Sir Robert as to his country guest’s feeling at home at the great town dinner.

On leaving office a year after, Sir Robert recommended him to the Queen for an annual pension of £100 :—one of the last acts, as the retiring minister intimated, of his official career, and one he should always reflect on with pleasure.

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

—B. Barton gratefully accepted the boon. And to the very close of life he continued, after his fashion, to send letters and occasional poems to Sir Robert, and to receive a few kind words in reply.

In 1844 died Bernard's eldest sister, Maria Hack. She was five or six years older than himself; very like him in the face; and had been his instructress ('a sort of oracle to me,' he says) when both were children. 'It is a heavy blow to me,' he writes, 'for Maria is almost the first human being I remember to have fondly loved, or been fondly loved by—the only living participant in my first and earliest recollections. When I lose her, I had almost as well never have been a child; for she only knew me as such—and the best and brightest of memories are apt to grow dim when they can be no more reflected.' 'She was just older enough than I,' he elsewhere says, 'to recollect distinctly what I have a confused glimmering of—about our house at Hertford—even of hers at Carlisle.'

Mr. Barton had for many years been an *ailing* man, though he never was, I believe, *dangerously* ill (as it is called) till the last year of his life. He took very little care of himself; laughed at all rules of diet, except temperance; and had for nearly forty years, as he said, 'taken almost as little exercise as a mile-stone, and far less fresh air.' Some years before his death he had been warned of a liability to disease in the

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

heart, an intimation he did not regard, as he never felt pain in that region. Nor did he to that refer the increased distress he began to feel in exertion of any kind, walking fast or going up-stairs, a distress which he looked upon as the disease of old age, and which he used to give vent to in half-humorous groans, that seemed to many of his friends rather expressive of his dislike to exercise, than implying any serious inconvenience from it. But probably the disease that partly arose from inactivity now became the true apology for it. During the last year of his life, too, some loss of his little fortune, and some perplexity in his affairs, not so distressing because of any present inconvenience to himself, as in the prospect of future evil to one whom he loved as himself, may have increased the disease within him, and hastened its final blow.

Towards the end of 1848 the evil symptoms increased much upon him; and, shortly after Christmas, it was found that the disease was far advanced. He consented to have his diet regulated; protesting humorously against the small glass of small beer allowed him in place of the temperate allowance of generous port, or ale, to which he was accustomed. He fulfilled his daily duty in the bank,¹ only remitting (as he was peremptorily bid) his attendance there after his

¹ He had written of himself, some years before, 'I shall go on making figures till Death makes me a cipher.'

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

four o'clock dinner.¹ And though not able to go out to his friends, he was glad to see them at his own house to the last.

Here is a letter, written a few days before his death, to one of his kindest and most hospitable friends.

'2 mo, 14, 1849.

'My dear old Friend—Thy home-brewed has been duly received, and I drank a glass yesterday with relish, but I must not indulge too often—for I make slow way, if any, toward recovery, and at times go on puffing, panting, groaning, and making a variety of noises, not unlike a loco-motive at first starting; more to give vent to my own discomfort, than for the delectation of those around me. So I am not fit to go into company, and cannot guess when I shall. However, I am free from much acute suffering, and not so much hypp'd as might be forgiven in a man who has such trouble about his breathing that it naturally puts him on

¹ For which he half accused himself as '*a skulker.*' And of late years, when the day account of the bank had not come quite right by the usual hour of closing, and it seemed necessary to carry on business late into the evening, he would sometimes come up wearied to his room, saying—'Well, we've got all right but a shilling, and I've left my boys' (as he called the younger clerks) 'to puzzle that out.' But even then he would get up from "Rob Roy" or the "Antiquary," every now and then, and go to peep through the curtain of a window that opens upon the back of the bank, and, if he saw the great gas-lamp flaming within, announce with a half comical sympathy, that 'they were still at it'; or, when the lamp was at last extinguished, would return to his chair more happily, now that his partners were liberated.

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

thinking how long he may be able to breathe at all. But if the hairs of one's head are numbered, so, by a parity of reasoning, are the puffs of our bellows. I write not in levity, though I use homely words. I do not think J—— sees any present cause of serious alarm, but I do not think he sees, on the other hand, much prospect of speedy recovery, if of entire recovery at all. The thing has been coming on for years; and cannot be cured at once, if at all. A man can't poke over desk or table for forty years without putting some of the machinery of the chest out of sorts. As the evenings get warm and light we shall see what gentle exercise and a little fresh air can do. In the last few days too I have been in solicitude about a little pet niece of mine dying, if not dead, at York: this has somewhat worried me, and agitation or excitement is as bad for me as work or quickness of motion. Yet, after all, I have really more to be thankful for than to grumble about. I have no very acute pain, a skeely doctor, a good nurse, kind solicitous friends, a remission of the worst part of my desk hours—so why should I fret? Love to the youngers. Thine, B.'

On Monday, February 19, he was unable to get into the bank, having passed a very unquiet night—the first night of distress, he thankfully said, that his illness had caused him. He

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

suffered during the day ; but welcomed as usual the friends who came to see him as he lay on his sofa ; and wrote a few *notes*—for his correspondence must now, as he had humorously lamented, become as short-breathed as himself. In the evening, at half-past eight, as he was yet conversing cheerfully with a friend, he rose up, went to his bed-room, and suddenly rang the bell. He was found by his daughter—dying. Assistance was sent for ; but all assistance was vain. ‘In a few minutes more,’ says the note despatched from the house of death that night, ‘all distress was over on *his* part—and that warm kind heart is still for ever.’

The Letters and Poems that follow are very faithful revelations of Bernard Barton’s soul ; of the genuine piety to God, good-will to men, and cheerful guileless spirit, which animated him, not only while writing in the undisturbed seclusion of the closet, but (what is a very different matter) through the walk and practice of daily life. They prove also his intimate acquaintance with the Bible, and his deep appreciation of many beautiful passages which might escape a common reader.

The Letters show, that while he had well considered, and well approved, the pure principles of Quakerism, he was equally liberal in his recognition of other forms of Christianity. He

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

could attend the *church*, or the *chapel*, if the *meeting* were not at hand ; and once assisted in raising money to build a new *Established Church* in Woodbridge. And while he was sometimes roused to defend Dissent from the vulgar attacks of High Church and Tory,¹ he could also give the bishops a good word when they were unjustly assailed.

While duly conforming to the usages of his Society on all proper occasions, he could forget

¹ Here are two little Epigrams showing that the quiet Quaker *could* strike, though he was seldom provoked to do so.

DR. E——.

‘ A bullying, brawling champion of the Church ;
Vain as a parrot screaming on her perch ;
And, like that parrot, screaming out by rote
The same stale, flat, unprofitable note ;
Still interrupting all discreet debate
With one eternal cry of “ Church and State ! ”—
With all the High Tory’s ignorance, increased
By all the arrogance that marks the priest ;
One who declares upon his solemn word,
The voluntary system is absurd :
He well may say so ;—for ’twere hard to tell
Who would support him, did not law compel.’

On one who declared in a public speech—‘ This was the opinion he had formed of the Dissenters ; he only saw in them wolves in sheep’s clothing.’

“ Wolves in sheep’s clothing ! ” bitter words and big ;
But who applies them ? first *the speaker* scan ;
A suckling Tory ! an apostate Whig !
Indeed, a very silly, weak young man !
What such an one may either think or say
With sober people matters not one pin ;
In *their* opinion, his own senseless bray
Proves *him* the ASS WRAPT IN A LION’S SKIN.’

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

thee and *thou* while mixing in social intercourse with people of another vocabulary, and smile at the Reviewer who reproved him for using the heathen name *November* in his Poems. ‘I find,’ he said, ‘these names of the months the prescriptive dialect of *poetry*, used as such by many members of our Society before me—“sans peur et sans reproche”; and I use them accordingly, asking no questions for conscience’ sake, as to their origin. Yet while I do this, I can give my cordial tribute of approval to the scruples of our early friends, who advocate a simpler nomenclature. I can quite understand and respect their simplicity and godly sincerity; and I conceive that I have duly shown my reverence for their scruples in adhering *personally* to their dialect, and only using another *poetically*. Ask the British Friend the name of the planet with a belt round it, and he would say, Saturn; at the peril, and on the pain, of excommunication.’

As to his politics, he always used to call himself, ‘a Whig of the old school.’ Perhaps, like most men in easy circumstances, he grew more averse to change as he grew older. He thus writes to a friend in 1845, during the heats occasioned by the proposed Repeal of the Corn Laws:—‘Queer times these, and strange events. I feel most shamefully indifferent about the whole affair; but my political fever has long since spent itself. It was about its height when

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

they sent Burdett to the Tower. It has cooled down wonderfully since then. He went there, to the best of my recollection, in the character of Burns's Sir William Wallace—

“Great patriot hero—ill-requited chief;”—

and dwindled down afterwards to “Old Glory.” No more patriots for me.’ But Bernard Barton did not trouble himself much about politics. He occasionally grew interested when the interests of those he loved were at stake; and his affections generally guided his judgment. Hence he was always against a Repeal of the Corn Laws, because he loved Suffolk farmers, Suffolk labourers, and Suffolk fields. Occasionally he took part in the election of a friend to Parliament—writing in prose or verse in the county papers. And here also, though he more willingly sided with the Liberal interest, he would put out a hand to help the good old Tory at a pinch.

He was equally tolerant of men, and free of acquaintance. So long as men were honest, (and he was slow to suspect them to be otherwise,) and reasonably agreeable, (and he was easily pleased,) he could find company in them. ‘My temperament,’ he writes, ‘is, as far as a man can judge of himself, eminently social. I am wont to live out of myself, and to cling to anything or anybody loveable within my reach.’ I have before said that he was equally welcome and equally at ease, whether at the Hall or at

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

the Farm ; himself indifferent to rank, though he gave every one his title, not wondering even at those of his own community, who, unmindful perhaps of the military implication, owned to the soft impeachment of *Esquire*. But no where was he more amiable than in some of those humbler meetings—about the fire in the *keeping-room* at Christmas, or under the walnut-tree in summer. He had his cheerful remembrances with the old ; a playful word for the young—especially with children, whom he loved and was loved by.—Or, on some summer afternoon, perhaps, at the little inn on the heath, or by the river-side—or when, after a pleasant picnic on the sea-shore, we drifted homeward up the river, while the breeze died away at sunset, and the heron, at last startled by our gliding boat, slowly rose from the ooze over which the tide was momentarily encroaching.

By nature, as well as by discipline perhaps, he had a great dislike to most violent occasions of feeling and manifestations of it, whether in real life or story. Many years ago he entreated the author of ‘May you like it,’ who had written some tales of powerful interest, to write others ‘where the appeals to one’s feelings were perhaps less frequent—I mean one’s sympathetic feelings with suffering virtue—and the more pleasurable emotions called forth by the spectacle of quiet, unobtrusive, domestic happiness more dwelt on.’ And when Mr. Tayler had long neglected to

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

answer a letter, Barton humorously proposed to rob him on the highway, in hopes of recovering an interest by crime which he supposed everyday good conduct had lost. Even in Walter Scott, his great favourite, he seemed to relish the humorous parts more than the pathetic ;—Bailie Nicol Jarvie's dilemmas at Glennaquoich, rather than Fergus MacIvor's trial ; and Oldbuck and his sister Grizel rather than the scenes at the fisherman's cottage. Indeed, many, I dare say, of those who only know Barton by his poetry, will be surprised to hear how much humour he had in himself, and how much he relished it in others. Especially, perhaps, in later life, when men have commonly had quite enough of 'domestic tragedy,' and are glad to laugh when they can.

With little critical knowledge of pictures, he was very fond of them, especially such as represented scenery familiar to him—the shady lane, the heath, the corn-field, the village, the sea-shore. And he loved after coming away from the bank to sit in his room and watch the twilight steal over his landscapes as over the real face of nature, and then lit up again by fire or candle light. Nor could any itinerant picture-dealer pass Mr. Barton's door without calling to tempt him to a new purchase. And then was B. B. to be seen, just come up from the bank, with broad-brim and spectacles on, examining some picture set before him on a chair in the

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

most advantageous light ; the dealer recommending, and Barton wavering, until partly by money, and partly by exchange of some older favourites, with perhaps a snuff-box thrown in to turn the scale ; a bargain was concluded — generally to B. B.'s great disadvantage and great content. Then friends were called in to admire ; and letters written to describe ; and the picture taken up to his bed-room to be seen by candle light on going to bed, and by the morning sun on awaking ; then hung up in the best place in the best room ; till in time perhaps it was itself exchanged away for some newer favourite.

He was not learned—in language, science, or philosophy. Nor did he care for the loftiest kinds of poetry—‘the heroics,’ as he called it. His favourite authors were those that dealt most in humour, good sense, domestic feeling, and pastoral description—Goldsmith, Cowper, Wordsworth in his lowlier moods, and Crabbe. One of his favourite prose books was Boswell's Johnson ; of which he knew all the good things by heart, an inexhaustible store for a country dinner-table.¹ And many will long remember him as he used to sit at table, his snuff-box in his hand, and a glass of genial wine before him, repeating some favourite passage, and glancing his fine brown eyes about him as he recited.

¹ He used to look with some admiration at an ancient fellow-townsmen, who, besides a rich fund of Suffolk stories vested in him, had once seen Dr. Johnson alight from a hackney-coach at the Mitre.

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

But perhaps his favourite prose book was Scott's Novels. These he seemed never tired of reading, and hearing read. During the last four or five winters I have gone through several of the best of these with him—generally on one night in each week—Saturday night, that left him free to the prospect of Sunday's relaxation. Then was the volume taken down impatiently from the shelf almost before tea was over ; and at last, when the room was clear, candles snuffed, and fire stirred, he would read out, or listen to, those fine stories, anticipating with a glance, or an impatient ejaculation of pleasure, the good things he knew were coming—which he liked all the better for knowing they were coming—relishing them afresh in the fresh enjoyment of his companion, to whom they were less familiar ; until the modest supper coming in closed the book, and recalled him to his cheerful hospitality.

Of the literary merits of this volume, others, less biassed than myself by personal and local regards, will better judge. But the Editor, to whom, as well as the Memoir, the task of making any observations of this kind usually falls, has desired me to say a few words on the subject.

The Letters, judging from internal evidence as well as from all personal knowledge of the author's habits, were for the most part written off with the same careless ingenuousness that

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

characterized his conversation. 'I have no alternative,' he said, 'between not writing at all, and writing what first comes into my head.' In both cases the same cause seems to me to produce the same agreeable effect.

The Letters on graver subjects are doubtless the result of graver 'foregone conclusion,'—but equally spontaneous in point of utterance, without any effort at style whatever.

If the Letters here published are better than the mass of those they are selected from, it is because better topics happened to present themselves to one who, though he wrote so much, had perhaps as little of new or animating to write about as most men.

The Poems, if not written off as easily as the Letters, were probably as little elaborated as any that ever were published. Without claiming for them the highest attributes of poetry, (which the author never pretended to,) we may surely say they abound in genuine feeling and elegant fancy expressed in easy, and often very felicitous, verse. These qualities employed in illustrating the religious and domestic affections, and the pastoral scenery with which such affections are perhaps most generally associated, have made Bernard Barton, as he desired to be, a household poet with a large class of readers—a class, who, as they may be supposed to welcome such poetry as being the articulate voice of those good feelings yearning in their own bosoms,

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

one may hope will continue and increase in England.

While in many of these Poems it is the spirit within that redeems an imperfect form—just as it lights up the irregular features of a face into beauty—there are many which will surely abide the test of severer criticism. Such are several of the Sonnets ; which, if they have not (and they do not aim at) the power and grandeur, are also free from the pedantic stiffness of so many English Sonnets. Surely that one ‘To my Daughter,’ is very beautiful in all respects.

Some of the lighter pieces—‘To Joanna,’ ‘To a young Housewife,’ etc., partake much of Cowper’s playful grace. And some on the decline of life, and the religious consolations attending it, are very touching.

Charles Lamb said the verses ‘To the Memory of Bloomfield,’ were ‘sweet with Doric delicacy.’ May not one say the same of those ‘On Leiston Abbey,’ ‘Cowper’s Rural Walks,’ on ‘Some Pictures,’ and others of the shorter descriptive pieces? Indeed, utterly incongruous as at first may seem the Quaker clerk and the ancient Greek Idyllist, some of these little poems recall to me the inscriptions in the Greek Anthology—not in any particular passages, but in their general air of simplicity, leisurely elegance, and quiet unimpassioned pensiveness.

Finally, what Southey said of *one* of Barton’s volumes—‘there are many rich passages and

MEMOIR OF BERNARD BARTON

frequent felicity of expression'—may modestly be said of these selections from ten. Not only is the fundamental thought of many of them very beautiful—as in the poems, 'To a Friend in Distress,' 'The Deserted Nest,' 'Thought in a Garden,' etc.,—but there are many verses whose melody will linger in the ear, and many images that will abide in the memory. Such surely are those of men's hearts brightening up at Christmas 'like a fire new stirred,'—of the stream that leaps along over the pebbles 'like happy hearts by holiday made light,'—of the solitary tomb showing from afar like a lamb in the meadow. And in the poem called 'A Dream,'—a dream the poet really had,—how beautiful is that chorus of the friends of her youth who surround the central vision of his departed wife, and who, much as the dreamer wonders they do not see she is a spirit, and silent as she remains to their greetings, still with countenances of 'blameless mirth,' like some of Correggio's angel attendants, press around her without awe or hesitation, repeating 'welcome, welcome!' as to one suddenly returned to them from some earthly absence only, and not from beyond the dead—from heaven.

E. F. G.

DEATH OF BERNARD BARTON

(FROM 'Ipswich Journal,' Feb. 24th 1849)

AT Woodbridge, on the night of Monday last, February the 19th, between the hours of eight and nine, after a brief spasm in the heart, died Bernard Barton. He was born near London in 1784, came to Woodbridge in 1806, where he shortly after married and was left a widower at the birth of his only child, who now survives him. In 1810 he entered as clerk in Messrs. Alexander's Bank, where he officiated almost to the day of his death. He had been for some months afflicted with laborious breathing which his doctor knew to proceed from disease in the heart, though there seemed no reason to apprehend immediate danger. But those who have most reason to lament his loss, have also most reason to be thankful that he was spared a long illness of anguish and suspense, by so sudden and easy a dismissal.

To the world at large Bernard Barton was known as the author of much pleasing, amiable,

DEATH OF BERNARD BARTON

and pious poetry, animated by feeling and fancy, delighting in homely subjects, so generally pleasing to English people. He sang of what he loved—the domestic virtues in man, and the quiet pastoral scenes of Nature—and especially of his own county—its woods, and fields, and lanes, and homesteads, and the old sea that washed its shores ; and the nearer to his own home the better he loved it. There was a true and pure vein of pastoral feeling in him. Thousands have read his books with innocent pleasure ; none will ever take them up and be the worse for doing so. The first of these volumes was published in 1812.

To those of his own neighbourhood he was known beside as a most amiable, genial, charitable man—of pure, unaffected, unpretending piety—the good neighbour—the cheerful companion—the welcome guest—a hospitable host—tolerant of all men, sincerely attached to many. Few, high or low, but were glad to see him at his customary place in the bank ; to exchange some words of kindly greeting with him—few but were glad to have him at their own homes ; and there he was the same man and had the same manners to all ; always equally frank, genial, and communicative, without distinction of rank. He had all George Fox's 'better part'—thorough independence of rank, titles, wealth, and all the distinctions of haberdashery, without making any needless display of such independence. He could dine with

DEATH OF BERNARD BARTON

Sir Robert Peel one day, and the next day sup off bread and cheese with equal relish at a farmhouse, and relate with equal enjoyment at the one place what he had heard and seen at the other.

He was indeed as free from vanity as any man, in spite of the attention which his books drew towards him. If he liked to write, and recite, and print his own occasional verses, it was simply that he himself was interested in them at the time—interested in the subject—in the composition, and amused with the very printing ; but he was equally amused with anything his friends had said or written—repeating it everywhere with almost disproportionate relish. And this surely is not a usual mark of vanity. Indeed, had he had more vanity, he would have written much less instead of so much, would have altered, and polished, and condensed. Whereas it was all first impulse with him ; he would never correct his own verses, though he was perfectly ready to let his friends alter what they chose in them—nay, ask them to do so, so long as he was not called on to assist.

It was the same with his correspondence, which was one great amusement of his later years. He wrote off as he thought and felt, never pausing to turn a sentence, or to point one ; and he was quite content to receive an equally careless reply, so long as it came. He was content with a poem so long as it was good

DEATH OF BERNARD BARTON

in the main, without minding those smaller beauties which go to make up perfection—content with a letter that told of health and goodwill, with very little other news—and content with a friend who had the average virtues and accomplishments of men, without being the faultless monster which the world never saw, but so many are half their lives looking for.

It was the same with his conversation. He never dressed himself for it, whatever company he was going into. He would quote his favourite poems in a farmhouse, and tell his humorous Suffolk stories in the genteelest drawing-room—what came into his head at the impulse of the moment came from his tongue; a thing not in general commendable, but wholly pleasant and harmless in one so innocent, so kind, and so agreeable as himself.

He was excellent company in all companies; but in none more than in homely parties, in or out of doors, over the winter's fire in the farmhouse, or under the tree in summer. He had a cheery word for all; a challenge to good fellowship with the old—a jest with the young—enjoying all, and making all enjoyable and joyous. Many hereabout will long look to that place in their rooms where this good, amiable, and pleasant man used to sit, and spread good-humour around him. Nor can the present writer forget the last out-of-door party he enjoyed with this most amiable man; it was in last June, down his favourite

DEATH OF BERNARD BARTON

river Deben to the sea. Though far from well, when once on board, he would be cheerful ; was as lively and hearty as any at the little inn at which we disembarked to refresh ourselves ; and had a word of cheery salute for every boat or vessel that passed or met us as we drifted home again with a dying breeze at close of evening.

He was not learned, in languages, or in science of any kind. Even the loftier poetry of our own country he did not much affect. He loved the masters of the homely, the pathetic, and the humorous—Crabbe, Cowper, and Goldsmith—for it may surprise many readers of his poems that he had as great relish for humour—good-humoured humour—as any man. And few of his friends will forget him as he used to sit at table, his snuff-box in hand, and a glass of genial wine before him as he repeated some humorous passage from one of his favourites, glancing his fine brown eyes around the company as he recited. Amongst prose works, his great favourite was Sir Walter Scott—him he was never tired of reading. He would not allow that one novel was bad, and the best were to him the best of all books. For the last four winters, the present writer has gone through several of these masterpieces with him—generally one night in the week was so employed—Saturday night, which left him free to the prospect of the Sunday's relaxation. Then was the volume taken down impatiently from the shelf, almost before tea

DEATH OF BERNARD BARTON

was over ; and at last when all was ready, candle snuffed, and fire stirred, he would read out, or listen to, those fine stories, one after another, anticipating with a smile, or a glance, the pathetic or humorous turns that were coming—that he relished all the more because he knew they were coming—enjoying all as much the twentieth time of reading as he had done at the first—till supper coming in, closed the book, and recalled him to his genial hospitality, which knew no limit. It was only on Friday last we finished the “Heart of Midlothian,” which he enjoyed, however ill at ease ; on Sunday he wanted to know when we should (begin another novel), and on Monday night, after a little mortal agony (to use the words of one who loved him best, and by him was best beloved of all the world), that warm kind heart was still for ever.

It would not be fitting to record in a public paper the domestic virtues of a private man, but Bernard Barton was a public man ; and the public is pleased, or should be pleased, to know that a writer really is as amiable as his books pretend. No common case, especially in the poetic line, where the very sensibilities that constitute poetic feeling are most apt to revolt at the little rubs of common life. Scarce a year has elapsed since the death of one of his oldest and dearest friends—Major Moor—whose praise he justly celebrated in verse. Major Moor was also as well known to the public by his books,

DEATH OF BERNARD BARTON

as much beloved by a large circle of friends. These two men were, perhaps, of equal abilities, though of a different kind ; their virtues equal and the same. Long does the memory of such men haunt the places of their mortal abode ; stirring within us, perhaps, at the close of many a day, as the sun sets over the scenes with which they were so long associated. It is surely not improper to endeavour to record something to the honour of such men in their own neighbourhoods. Nay, should we not, if we could, make their histories as public as possible, for surely none could honour them without loving them, and, perhaps, unconsciously striving to follow in their footsteps.

FROM THE *Ipswich Journal*, March 3, 1849

WOODBIDGE

FUNERAL OF BERNARD BARTON.—On Monday Feb. 26, the mortal remains of Bernard Barton were committed to the earth. A long train of members of the Society to which he belonged, and of old friends and fellow-townsmen, waited to follow him from the door from which he had so often been seen to issue alive and welcome to all eyes. Thus attended, the coffin was borne up the street to the cemetery of the Friends' Meeting-house; and there, surrounded by the grave and decent Brotherhood, and amid the affecting silence of their ceremonial, broken but once by the warning voice of one reverent elder, was lowered down into its final resting-place.

Lay him gently in the ground,
The good, the genial, and the wise;
While Spring blows forward in the skies
To breathe new verdure o'er the mound
Where the kindly Poet lies.

FUNERAL OF BERNARD BARTON

Gently lay him in his place,
While the still Brethren round him stand ;
The soul indeed is far away,
But we would reverence the clay
In which so long she made a stay,
Beaming through the friendly face,
And holding forth the honest hand—

Thou, that didst so often twine
For other urns the funeral song,
One who has known and lov'd thee long,
Would, ere he mingles with the throng,
Just hang this little wreath on thine.

Farewell, thou spirit kind and true ;
Old Friend, for evermore Adieu !

DEATH
OF
THE REV. GEORGE CRABBE

Sept. 16. Of epilepsy, aged 72, the Rev. George Crabbe, Vicar of Bredfield, near Woodbridge, eldest son and biographer of the celebrated poet.

He was born Nov. 16, 1785, at Stathern in Leicestershire; educated at Ipswich Grammar School; took his degree in 1807, at Trinity College, Cambridge; a year after was ordained deacon, and entered on the curacy of Allington in Lincolnshire, where he continued till 1811, when he went to reside at Trowbridge, in Wiltshire, to which Rectory his father had just been presented by the Duke of Rutland.

In 1815 he gave up his duty and took to residing mainly in London, taking various walking excursions through the kingdom. In 1817 he married Caroline Matilda Timbrell, of Trowbridge, and took the curacy of Pucklechurch,

DEATH OF

in Gloucestershire, where he continued 18 years. It was in 1832 that, his father dying, and a complete edition of his Poems being called for, Mr. Crabbe contributed the volume containing the Poet's life, one of the most delightful memoirs in the language. In 1834 he was presented by Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst to the vicarages of Bredfield and Petistree, in Suffolk, in the former of which he built a parsonage, and continued residing till his death. Of his numerous family five children alone survive him, of whom the eldest son, George, in holy orders, is Rector of Merton, Norfolk, and the second, Thomas, is in Australia ; the remaining three are daughters. Besides his father's biography Mr. Crabbe was author of a volume of ' Natural Theology,' on the plan and in the form of the ' Bridgewater Treatises,' and of several Theological and Scientific Tracts published independently or in magazines.

To manhood's energy of mind, and great bodily strength, he united the boy's heart ; as much a boy at seventy as boys need be at seventeen ; as chivalrously hopeful, trustful, ardent, and courageous ; as careless of riches, as intolerant of injustice and oppression, as incapable of all that is base, little, and mean. With this heroic temper were joined the errors of that over-much affection, rashness in judgment and act, liability to sudden and violent emotions, to sudden and sometimes unreasonable like and

THE REV. GEORGE CRABBE

dislike ; and, in defiance of experience and probability, over-confidence—not in himself, for he was almost morbidly self-distrustful—but in the cause he had at heart, that it *must* bring about the result he desired. One of those he was whose hearts, wild, but never going astray, are able only to breathe in the better and nobler elements of humanity.

Under a somewhat old-fashioned acquiescence with indifferent things and people he covered a heart that would have gladly defied death in vindication of any vital truth, often most loudly proclaiming what might most likely compromise himself ; a passionate advocate of enquiry and freedom and progress in all ways—civil, religious, and scientific ; as passionate a hater of all that would retard or fetter it ; and sometimes inclined to defend a dogma *because* bold and new and likely to be assailed. For there was much of the noble and Cervantic humourist in him, beside a certain quaintness of taste, resulting from a simple nature, brought up in simple habits and much country seclusion. And if a boy in feeling, he was a child in expressing his feelings, especially of enjoyment in little and simple things, which those more pampered by the world mistook for insincere. And whatever his intolerance of *verse*, he was far more the poet's son than he believed, bowing his white head with more than botanic welcome over the flower which reminded him of childhood, and

DEATH OF

convinced him of the Creator's sympathetic provision for his creatures' sense of beauty ; or in some of his long and strong walks, whether in solitary meditation or earnest conversation on the only subject he cared for, stopping to admire some little obscure parish church in which he could discern cathedral proportions, or to lament over some felled oak trees, by whose however needful fall, he declared the guilty landowner 'scandalously misused the globe.' For like many magnanimous men he had a passion for great trees and buildings ; indeed, an aptitude for architecture, which, if duly cultivated, might have become his real genius.

Not long before his death he left a short paper to be read by his children immediately after it, affirming up to the last period of responsible thought, that he was satisfied with the convictions he had so carefully come to ; bidding nobody mourn over one who had lived so long, and on the whole so happily ; and desiring to be buried as simply as he had lived, 'in any vacant space on the south side of the churchyard.' Thither, accordingly, he was carried, on Tuesday, Sept. 22 ; and there, attended by many more than were invited, and scarce one but with some funeral crape about him, were it no bigger than that about the soldier's arm, was laid in death among the poor whose friend he had been ; while the

THE REV. GEORGE CRABBE

descending September sun of one of the finest summers in living memory, broke out to fling a farewell beam into the closing grave of as generous a man as he is likely to rise upon again.

CHARLES LAMB

- 1775 Born February 10, in Crown Office Row, Middle Temple, where his Father, John Lamb, (*Elia's*¹ *Lovell*) was confidential Factotum to Samuel Salt, one of the Benchers. John Lamb had two other children; John (*James Elia*) born in 1763, and a clerk in the South Sea House; Mary (*Bridget Elia*) born in 1765.
- 1782 Charles Lamb sent to Christ's Hospital, where Jem White an officer; and Coleridge, George Dyer, and Le Grice, his school-fellows.
- 1789 Leaves School.
- 1792 Made Clerk in the East India House; occasionally meeting Coleridge (from Cambridge) at the 'Salutation and Cat,' 17, Newgate Street; and by him introduced to Southey, and Charles Lloyd, all warm with Poetry, Pantisocracy, &c.
- 1795 Living with paralyzed Father, Mother,

¹ 'Call him *Ellia*.' C. L. to Taylor, his publisher.

CHARLES LAMB

aged Aunt, and Sister Mary, on their united means of about £180 a year, at 7, Little Queen Street, Holborn.

1796 At the end of last year, and beginning of this, C. L. for six weeks in a mad-house at Hoxton. Soon after this, his Brother John (who does not live with the Family) is brought home to be nursed by them after an accident which threatened his own mind also. And on September 22, Mary Lamb, worn out with nursing her Family, kills her Mother, beside wounding her Father, in a fit of insanity. Charles wrests the knife from her hand and places her in a Private—he will not hear of a *Public*—Asylum, for so long as his Father survives.

1797 His Father dying, and carrying with him what pension he had from Mr. Salt, Charles takes his sister home, and lives with her on little more than his Clerkship of £100 a year. The old Aunt who lived with them dies at the beginning of the year : and another Aunt (Hetty) who had been taken to live with a Kinswoman is returned home at the end of it¹ to linger out nearly three years with them. In the meanwhile, Charles visits Coleridge in

¹ I find but *one* Aunt named by Lamb's biographers ; but the oversight may be mine. Certainly *two* are named as above in Lamb's letters to Coleridge 19, 22 ; and 29, 34, [Moxon's edition]. [Lamb's Aunt, his father's sister, died 9 Feb. 1797. Hetty, who died 9 May 1800, was probably the old maidservant.]

CHARLES LAMB

Somersetshire, where he meets Wordsworth.

- 1798 Rosamund Gray. Poems by C. Lloyd and C. Lamb published, some of which had been included in a previous volume of Coleridge's, who goes to Germany at Midsummer; up to which time he was Lamb's chief correspondent and adviser. After which,
- 1799 Correspondence with Southey; toward the end of the year introduction by C. Lloyd to Manning, Mathematical Tutor at Cambridge: who becomes Lamb's most intimate friend and correspondent till his departure for China.
- 1800 Established with Mary at 16, Mitre Court Buildings.¹ Correspondence with Wordsworth begins.
- 1801 'John Woodvil' published. About this time Lamb comes to know Godwin and Hazlitt.
- 1802 Visit with Mary to Coleridge at Keswick, who, afterward engaging to write for the Morning Post, gets Lamb to jest for it, at £2 2s. a week.
- 1803 No literary work: punning for the 'Post' discontinued.
- 1804 No *Letter* extant, save one to Southey:

¹ Before settling here, he had lived at [45] Chapel Street, Pentonville; where he fell in love—for the first and only time—with his "sprightly neighbour," Hester Savory, the Quaker.

CHARLES LAMB

but much drink and smoke by night, and depression by day : a condition which, as we know from his own, and his sister's letters, had begun some years before, and lasted some years after.

- 1806 Manning goes to China. 'Mr. H.' written in a 3s. per week room, acted at Drury Lane and damned.
- 1807 Tales from 'Shakespeare' by C. and M. Lamb.
- 1808 'Specimens of Old Dramatists : ' 'Adventures of Ulysses ; ' 'Mrs. Leicester's School : ' and, soon after (1810), 'Poetry for Children : ' in all which, except the two first, Sister and Brother have a hand.
- 1809 Removal to 4, Inner Temple Lane, top-story, where the ' Wednesday nights.'
- 1817 Removed to [21,] Great Russell Street, corner¹ of Bow Street, (once Will's Coffee House), by and by taking also a lodging at 14, Kingsland Road, Dalston, to escape from over-much company.
- 1820 'Elia' begun with London Magazine.
- 1821 John Lamb dies.
- 1822 Trip to France with Mary, who, taken ill, is left with a friend at Amiens while

¹ [In a letter to Miss Wordsworth in November 1817, Mary Lamb says they are living at a brazier's shop, No. 20, in Russell Street, Covent Garden. According to a London Directory of that year, No. 21, the corner house, was occupied by Thomas Owen, an ironmonger, and No. 20 was apparently his private house.]

CHARLES LAMB

Charles runs to Paris, sees Talma, &c.
His only visit abroad.

1823 Elia published separately : difference and reconciliation with Southey ; and removal from lodgings to Colebrooke (Colnbrook) Cottage, Islington, as householders. During a holiday at Cambridge becomes acquainted with, and finally adopts, Emma Isola, orphan daughter of an Italian refugee and Esquire Bedell there.

1825 Pensioned off by the India House on £450 a year, with a small deduction for Mary in case of her surviving him : as she did for 13 years ; dying May 1847.

1827 Removes from Islington to a small house at Enfield Chase, where he had previously lodged from time to time.¹

1829 His old servant Becky having married and left, and his sister too much worried with housekeeping, they go to lodge and board with Mr. and Mrs. Westwood next door, in Enfield.

1833 To 'Bay Cottage,' Church Street, Edmonton, to board and lodge with Mr.

¹ On removing from Islington to Enfield in 1827 Lamb had written to Hood ;

'To change habitations is to die with them, and in my time I have died seven deaths. My household deaths have been all periodical, recurring after seven years.'

This may include some minor removals ; such as more than once in Southampton Buildings, Holborn.

CHARLES LAMB

and Mrs. Walden, under whose care Mary had previously been. Emma Isola marries Moxon the publisher at Midsummer.

1834 Coleridge dies July 25 ; and Charles Lamb December 24 [27].¹

¹ He left £2000—all his Earnings—for his Sister's use.

ON RED BOXES

SUPPLEMENT BY THE AUTHOR

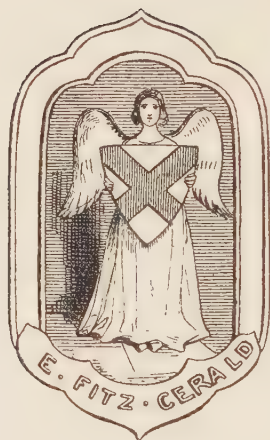
(From the fly-leaf at the end of a copy of 'Essays written in the Intervals of Business,' given me by FitzGerald. The fly-leaf at the beginning has a drawing by Thackeray. Sir Arthur Helps usually travelled with a red box).

It is good for a Counsellor to be attended on his travels with a Red Box, which may be carried with him in his Coach, and after him, as he alights, into his chamber. The eyes of men will follow him with the greater reverence. A Red Box is as it were a Star Chamber in small : a closed Court of High Commissions. It should not be so light as that men should conclude that the Counsellor had few and slight matters to engage his privacy : nor so large as to leave room for supposing that he cannot stir a step without the assistance of multiplied documents. It should be carried with tolerable ease by one man. But by all means let there be a Red Box

ON RED BOXES

of some size, though it be filled with a shirt, or household bills. Men must have a mystery : and to see the Counsellor after general solace and conversation withdraw to his chamber—men think—‘He goes to his papers again till ever so late, and up to it again ever so early’—He who first made a Box did much : he who invented a lock did more : but he who invented the oblong Red Box did more than all. For that includes a secret in the mechanism of Human Nature. There is a mystery in the figure which is suitable to State matters, which are commonly of diverse bearings and drawn out further in one direction than another. The square and the circle are too perfect shapes, where many interests of men are involved : and the rhomb would disclaim all order whatsoever. The triangle might indeed be well : but that hath been already bestowed upon the carriage of the cocked Hat. Therefore the Oblong remains, the special property, and as it were, Conscience of Counsellors. And Red hath been long noted as the trumpet colour of Authority.

THE END



FITZGERALD'S BOOK-PLATE, DESIGNED BY THACKERAY

Printed by R. & R. CLARK, LIMITED, Edinburgh



